

A PHILOSOPHIC VIEW  
OF  
THE LAND QUESTION

BY  
HENRY FOX

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# A PHILOSOPHIC VIEW OF THE LAND QUESTION

## PROLOGUE

THE Land Question is not a mere question of economics. It has a deeper significance than all questions of politics or of constitutional government or of any ordinary measure of reform.

It is a question which lies at the very root of our civilisation, because it affects the fundamental principles of human life.

Human life is governed by its necessities of existence, such as food, clothing, shelter and development.

The sunshine and the rain, the heat and the cold of every climate affect the lives of men at every turn. Man has been adapted to his environment by the same Power that produced him as the inheritor of the earth.

The earth with all its vast and inexhaustible store of potential wealth is man's natural home, just as the sea and the rivers are the natural home of the fish and other forms of life which can only



exist in water—some in fresh water only, others in salt water alone. The land controls the use of the air, of the water, and of the fire as well as of the earth itself.

The great process of evolution has *thrown up* man as the highest development of life upon the earth—not as a water animal, but as a land animal—with a mind that grows by thinking.

He is the supreme intelligence of all animal life and his career and destiny is by no means finished yet. In the higher stages of his development his career has hardly yet begun. As Shakespeare suggests, he is a being of “infinite capacity”: in point of his powers of action, “how like an angel”; in point of intellectual capacity, “how like a God.”

In all these higher aspects of his life and its development he varies as greatly as the animals below him in the scale of creation vary in their own sphere of life, even as a dull-witted sheep varies from the trained intelligence of the dog that guards the flock and carries out the orders of the shepherd.

At *this* present stage of man's evolution, the *dullest witted* man is waking up to ask himself why one man is born to hard toil all his life long in the service of other men, under conditions which too often end his life in penury and poverty, leaving his children to face the same fate (whether through

his own failure or not), whilst others, and those only a select few, find themselves, from no merit of their own, born to a life of luxury, splendour and refinement, free from all necessity to labour, and placed beyond the reach of all anxieties and heavy toils in the service of other men's lives and interests, not by the triumph of their own intellect or character over their own difficulties and dangers from ill health, accident or misfortune, but as inheritors of what is called their *Private Property*, to use or to abuse as they may chance to think proper.

Is this difference in fate and prospects a law of Nature, against which it is as useless to complain as it is to complain of the law of gravitation which inflicts a remorseless death on all who expose themselves to falls and other accidents? Or is it, not a law of Nature, but a deep-seated wrong done by our own inhuman laws and institutions, made and enforced by the powerful and the fortunate on the rest of their fellow-men?

This is the first glimpse of the great and fundamental principles involved in the Land Question.

Our present system of private property may be excellent economics for the present stage of civilisation.

The Duke of Northumberland has publicly stated that he thinks it is "a most excellent arrangement." Mr. Smillie could only reply that

he wondered how such an arrangement could really make the Duke a happy man.

Perhaps the Duke was conscious more of his own good work in promoting his own views of the happiness and welfare of his dependents and tenants than of Mr. Smilie's own experience among the miners. Whatever the explanation may be, it is clear that neither of them sees more than their own limited view of the whole truth.

It is therefore necessary for all of us to approach this great question from a very much wider point of view.

We must look at it not as a matter of mere personal interest, but from the standpoint of the fundamental principles involved in it.

We must ask ourselves : What is private property ? What makes this watch mine, and that table or picture or house yours ?

All such " personal property " (as the law calls it) is clearly the result of some one's labour and skill in working up the raw materials of the earth, or in using the earth for growing food and animals upon the earth for human necessities. The watch is mine because I exchanged the result of my labours in my own industry or profession for the results of the labour of others in obtaining the raw materials of the earth necessary to make the watch, combined with the skill of the craftsman in putting the watch together.

For the same reasons the table and the picture and the house are yours.

But where does the owner of the land come in? That is, the owner of the land from which these raw materials were obtained and collected? Is a man entitled justly to claim the ownership of any of the raw materials of wealth, whether by inheritance or by purchase?

However scattered in locality, all sources of production lie in the land. Did the owner or any other man make the land, or any of its raw materials? or any portion of them? the coal, the iron, the gold or silver, the fire or the water or the air, whose use is involved in the production of all personal property?

As to the claims of the land-owner to the coal and other minerals, worked at the risk and expense of the lessees of the mining lease, with a royalty on every ton of minerals worked and a dead rent as a minimum charge, imagine a great scientist charging royalty on the use of the *electrons* of matter by virtue of his discovery of the marvellous energy contained in them, leaving it to others to incur the risk of experiments how to use this latent energy, but charging so much for every horsepower of energy produced! This would be a charge no more preposterous than the royalties paid by lessees to the owner of the coal.

Some of these coal-owners receive upwards of

£70,000 a year in such royalties. Surely the scientist has much more right to charge a royalty for every horse-power of energy in the electrons discovered by his own skill and knowledge. And it is quite possible that the energy in electrons will one day supplant the energy in coal for industrial purposes.

Then our scientist would be entitled to an income of perhaps seven millions, and his discovery would be well worth the money to the nation. But the coal-owner created nothing and discovered nothing, yet he is paid by virtue of an ownership foreign to the law and entirely unknown to the founders of our system of land-owning, who were quite unaware either that there was coal underneath the ground or that it was the great source of energy for future generations.

In the countries of the continent of Europe the ownership of the soil gives no right to the minerals, and so their iron and steel factories are free from the burden of the royalties which increase the cost price of English steel, iron and coal, with the result that England loses large orders in competition with German and French iron and steel manufacturers.

The law calls the land "real property"—did any one ever create a single atom of real property? Did ever any human being add a single atom—or, say, a single electron—to the mass of matter in earth, air, fire, or water? Man himself is com-

posed of these raw materials of matter. Did ever a man contribute anything to his own bodily existence? He lives and exists in his body the debtor for his own life to the great and free gifts of Nature, which he uses and absorbs, he knows not how, every second of his life. His very heart beats involuntarily, and his body grows and carries on its own intricate machinery on the same principle. He can use or abuse his body, but he cannot create even a single item of the countless millions of atoms or "cells" of which he is composed.

Then how comes it that he or any individual can rightfully claim to be the owner of a single grain of God's earth? He is not the real owner even of his own body, nor of his mind and intellect and brain.

He himself—body, soul and spirit—belongs not to himself but to his Maker, for man did not make himself.

Personal property, being based on the right to the results of his own labour, does not extend its claim even to his own life and his own existence.

The laws of England recognise this by punishing attempted suicide as a crime.

The laws of England are undoubtedly the embodiment of the public common sense for the time being.

But they are not made to hold good for all time. Every generation revises them. They all grow more or less obsolete as circumstances change.

They are as much the subject of evolution as Nature itself. As civilisation grows and expands under the influence of the great and mysterious forces of Nature which we call evolution, so the law follows in its wake.

Even the law is subject to the process of evolution which rules the universe.

The invisible forces of Nature, of which evolution is but one, are not confined to the modern discoveries of electricity, nor to magnetism, nor to gravitation, nor to the ether which holds the whole universe together.

There are other great forces being gradually revealed to our minds concerning man's great capacities for action and knowledge.

The human race is gradually being illumined by new light.

It is the light of a rising sun within man himself. It is throwing its illuminating beams upon man's destiny as a spiritual being with a great mission to fulfil under the laws of his progressive evolution.

Shakespeare hinted at it long years since. It is man's evolution towards the invisible worlds around him here—the dwelling-place of “angels”—in their progress towards becoming “gods.”

In view of this destiny our laws must shape

themselves anew, as another proof of their common sense.

The time has come when this growing "common sense" will see the absolute and fundamental necessity of restoring to the human race the divine gift of the earth as the source of all the necessities of life, and of all its bountiful help in enabling a nation to live together in peace and unity of life and interest as co-heirs and inheritors of their native land.

How did it happen that the land of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales became the private possessions of a few who have thereby been able to establish themselves as the lords of the earth, dominating the nation which was forcibly expropriated from their native land in former times? This will be the aim and object of this little book to expound anew, for the purpose of reminding the readers of the full significance of what they already know full well.

From such a point of view as here indicated the Land Question will assume a new aspect.

It will become not a mere consideration of expediency, nor of party politics, nor of the science of Economics, but it will stand out far above the level of these considerations as a matter of fundamental justice due to the nation which claims for the people the ownership of their native land as



the foundation of a new and higher stage of civilisation.

Here let it be conceded that capital, whether laid out in improving the productive power of the land, or whether laid out in working up the raw materials of the land into some form of wealth, is a legitimate form of personal property, rightfully belonging to the man who so laid out his capital.

In fact it is claimed by our argument that this is the only legitimate form of private property. Nay, more: it is urged that the claim of private ownership of real estate is contrary to the fundamental laws of England. Modern lawyers, although recognising the authority of all the great exponents of the laws of England, still regard these fundamental laws of England as now only obsolete theories of law of no practical importance. Modern law cancels ancient law not by repeal, but by lofty contempt for its principles.

At this moment we are threatened by the Lord High Chancellor of England with an attempt to abolish all the distinctions of our ancient laws between real and personal property. This is indeed the consummation of long centuries of landlord legislation by which the rights of the English people to their inheritance in the Land of England, as represented by the Crown, have been gradually smothered up by hosts of Acts of Parliament, quietly ignoring the vital distinction

between real and personal property : till now at last every such distinction is to be obliterated.

It may well be possible that the nation will awake to the conviction that an outrage has been perpetrated by our ancestors, in depriving the nation of its lawful inheritance by force and violence in times past, and so committing a sacrilege against the immutable laws of Nature, and that to this cause we may well attribute the responsibility for all the misery, suffering and wretchedness of our present and past national difficulties and discontents, with all their threatening dangers now crowding thickly upon us. Evolution cannot be resisted except at the cost of revolution, but it may be guided into safe channels where it may perform its great work in peace, quiet and good will, just as the electric current does its great work in peace and quiet until resisted. Then electricity produces a similar conflagration to that which threatens us even now, under the name of Revolution.

In Ireland we see the baneful results of the confiscations of the sacred soil of Ireland by foreign plunderers, regardless of national sentiments. We see these results in evils extending over seven long centuries up to this day. In her case, resistance by vested interests to the forces of evolution have already produced many a sanguinary revolution. That of 1921 is still unfinished.

The peace of Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales depends for us upon our attitude towards the great Land Question. But our attitude itself depends on our knowledge of the facts, both of past history and of present practice, and also on our views of ourselves in relation to our duties to others.

This book is intended as a sort of reminder of the past and present history of the subject, gathered from a lifelong experience of the law and some original research work, in order to lead the readers to a fuller and more detailed knowledge, in preparation to face the great political and social upheaval before us all in the near future.

Meanwhile if the reader will bear in mind that the Land Question is only another name for the question whether all the freehold rental of the site value of English land is not essentially due and payable not to individuals who are the present owners of it under English law, but to the nation or the local community who by their increase in numbers and industry have created its whole value, then it will clear the ground for some definite conclusions on this subject.

Without the population the site value of all land would be *nil*. The greater the pressure of population the higher the value of the bare land either for agricultural or for building purposes.

In our big cities the site value of some of the

central situations amounts to three or four millions of pounds per acre for building purposes only. The bare land is free from all taxation. The industry carried on in the buildings erected on the land bears all the rates for the maintenance of the conveniences of the situation. The landowner at present obtains for himself alone without work or labour or risk of expenditure of capital the whole of this inflated value and rental.

That is the system of land-owning in England, and it applies to every acre of land in town or country. On the expiration of the long building leases the capital laid out by the lessee is confiscated by the landlord. This book is a plea in the national interests of justice and unity, to alter this system, but not to disturb either the present landlords or tenants in the occupation of the land.

It recognises the outlay of labour and capital in building and other improvements of the land as the lawful and rightful personal property of the men who did it all. It is their acknowledged tenant right, payable on the sale of their tenancy. There will be under this régime no more sales or purchases of freehold land, but only of the "tenant rights."

Finally, there can be no sounder basis for creating that unity of interest and of sentiment amongst all classes of men so necessary for peace and confi-

dence than the feeling to be generated in the minds of all occupiers of freehold land, that they are paying their rental not into the pockets of any individual, but into the national or local exchequer in reduction of the burden of taxation upon their work and industry. If all this necessitates the creation of a new Government Department to control and guide the new local land councils, this will be the very first occasion on which the nation has created a new Department of State, for the express purpose of collecting, saving and increasing the public revenue instead of spending it or giving powers to local governments to expend it in new extravagances promoted by the so-called guardians of the public purse.

It is full time that such local communities were put in action all over England. It means the redemption of the nation from national bankruptcy as the result of the late war.

In all this we are setting in action those powerful forces of evolution which will enable the nation to work out its destiny without the horrors we have witnessed in Russia and elsewhere.

This book endeavours to work out a fair and just scheme for buying out the vested interests of the present land-owners, in order to clear the ground for the most fundamental reform of our civilisation ever yet undertaken by any nation or people, in history ancient or modern.

The importance of such a movement cannot easily be over-estimated.

It is the work involved in co-operating with Nature in her efforts and labours in the hour of her travail to produce a new civilisation.

This new civilisation must be born within the hearts of the present generation before it can come to birth as the new and bright hope of all future generations.

Manual labour as well as the work of intellect and brains and powers of management and organisation will then become willing service for others who employ them in the great industries of the times, not the grudging necessity of toil it is at present. There will arise from a fundamental unity of interest in the great national inheritance in the land a new feeling of unity of interest with all classes and kinds of labour. If there will be no millionaires there will be no paupers. If the burden of taxation on our industries is lessened by our co-operative work of production of wealth, the trade unions and their restrictive regulations will cease to hinder production and will thereby reduce unemployment to the very minimum ever yet known.

The new civilisation will thus transform man from a self-regarding, and often a ferocious and dangerous animal, into a being with a glimpse of a higher and nobler purpose in his life than the

accumulation of any superfluous wealth for his own personal aggrandisement. If none shall starve, all must work. Idleness, drunkenness, profligacy—and even gross, besotted ignorance—will become a crime in all classes of life, from the highest to the lowest : a crime to be effaced by the discipline of a compulsory training for work. Every one will be born not only as one of the greatest national assets—the people of the nation—but they will have their inheritance in the land of the nation as the next greatest asset of their country. Mr. Bernard Shaw's conception of an income attached to every baby will be realised, but in a different way. The baby's inheritance will consist in its claim to the care necessary to make him or her a new and competent worker in the great national hive of industry, according to his or her capabilities and gifts; also a holding of land for cultivation at the economic rent of it for all who are qualified to cultivate or use it properly.

The education and training of the children will be the main care of all the community, and the scandal of our present neglected and often disowned children will be wiped out by investing each of them with the dignity of being a co-heir or co-heiress of the land of their birth.

This and many another fundamental change in our views of the dignity of every human being will inspire that self-respect which is destroyed by our

present lavish expenditure in public and private charities.

The greatest national need is not charity, nor doles, nor "panem" nor "circenses," but a higher and a truer view of the nature and constitution of man.

The Occultism of Philosophy is the key which unlocks the great secrets of the human race, inherent in the principles of every religion of the world, but particularly prominent in fundamental Christianity.

For this reason this book has been christened  
"A PHILOSOPHIC VIEW OF THE LAND QUESTION."

For the Occult Philosopher, man's life on earth is but a minute fraction and a purely temporary phase of his existence, in which the past and the future stages are hidden from his view until he has learnt to qualify himself for his higher destiny, by the expansion of his consciousness beyond the limitations of his undeveloped senses.

In short, Occult Philosophy may be defined as the cultivation of the knowledge of the hidden regions of man's consciousness, with the very practical result of changing his present views about *Wealth* as the main object of his life here in favour of *Well-Being* as the real source of his growth and of his happiness, this being the fulfilment of his destiny.



The secrets of Masonry and of all the ancient "mysteries" are revealed to the occultist as the great secrets of man's practical life.

They are the heralds of the birth of a new civilisation.

Only since the year 1920 that gave the widened franchise to the people of England has the public acquired their full share of control over their own Government. Prior to that date their liberties were held in bondage, more or less, by the governing classes of the day. So that the real strength of the enlightened will of the people has hardly yet been realised or felt.

Not one in a hundred of our men citizens is yet interested in the great Land Question—not one in a thousand amongst our women voters. Because they are entirely unaware that the Land Question affects their interests in any practical fashion.

This book is an attempt to enlighten them on that subject, and to show to them that the Land Question is not only at the bottom of most of their social and economic troubles but has made the history of their country a record of oppression and brutality from the date of the Norman Conquest till the end of the eighteenth century—and even beyond that date in diminishing degrees. But further than this. The influence of our land system has established amongst us a false ideal of civilisa-

tion which permeates our minds to this day, and is mainly responsible for the political and social antagonisms which are threatening to tear the interests of our country to pieces by destroying the real and fundamental unity of our lives and interests.

No League of Nations can produce peace at home even if successful in preventing war with our neighbours. The whole of England, Scotland and Wales is at this moment seething with unrest at home, whilst in Ireland there is actual warfare of the worst kind.

This book endeavours to show that the Land Question is at the root of it all, that it touches the real mainspring of our daily lives and daily thoughts about ourselves and our neighbours; that it touches also the pockets of the women who crowd our great shops or cater for the men, who themselves are struggling with its consequences in every hour of their business and domestic life.

We are all more or less unconscious of the real ultimate causes of our troubles and worries, as well as of our powers to regulate our lives by probing into the great secrets which philosophy reveals to its students. Philosophy has a practical application to our daily lives which will hasten that form of a new civilisation for which the whole world seems to be groaning and in which seems to lie our only hope of peace and content.

When "man" has learnt to "know himself" in all his mysterious profundity he will need no Delphic oracle and no mediums or professors of religion to guide him, for he will understand his neighbour better, and he will live for higher purposes than our present civilisation has ever rendered possible.

The first step towards this higher evolution is the restoration of the land to the people who inhabit it, for it will be the restoration to the people of the control of their own means of livelihood as given to them by Nature's beneficence, and the creation of a unity of interest which will heal their strifes and antagonisms by removing the ultimate cause of their conflicting interests.

## THE PHILOSOPHIC POINT OF VIEW

ANY man who has lived beyond the "three-score years and ten," which has generally been taken as the ordinary limit of life in the flesh, must necessarily take a different view of life from those who are still in its "hurly-burly."

For such a man, the next stage of existence is of far more interest than the present. But the world is still full of interest for him, not as a participator so much as a spectator. On this great spectacle, a new light seems to be dawning for a septuagenarian which those still in the height of their energies and work seem unable to see. It is perhaps the more real a view for being detached from personal interest.

As in Nature itself, the things in life which we cannot see, or do not realise, are the things that matter most. This is one of the revelations of old age.

Human beings are very like moles. These blind animals are unaware of the sun by which they live. So man lives by grubbing in the earth, blind to the greatest realities of his existence. In this respect, old age is an age of illumination, which opens up a new sense of vision. It is the vision of the soul

of man "hidden" from the young and "occult" even to the old.

Well did St. Paul say that the visible things of life are temporal, but the invisible are eternal. For old age, the invisible becomes the real; so, when the visible world with all the men and things in it are gradually fading away from his vision, the author has ventured to try to express his "thinkings" about the world from this point of view. But he sees no reason why the young should be blind. They, too, have the same power of vision without knowing it.

It should be of some interest to them to know what they could see if their real vision were awakened.

It might alter their point of view, and enlarge their visible landscape; it would not deprive them of the "joy of living." On the contrary, this joy would be increased. To arrive at an estimate of the real values of the things after which they strive in the full vigour of their faculties, would be for them a service of the most practical importance. They would not need to live to be old before they became wise.

They would be wise in their youth : and of such men and women the world stands in great and urgent need. There is no school of wisdom yet recognised as an elementary part of education. Yet it is the essence of wisdom—to know the true

realities of life, even in youth. By beginning early in this great "quest," the young can achieve what none can do who seek wisdom only in their old age, and not always then.

Now let it be well understood that the author makes no claim to be more than a seeker after truth in his old age. He seeks only to help other seekers if he can. How it began with him is illustrated by some of his thinkings here set out for the consideration of his fellow-seekers. The one great conclusion at which he has arrived is that *youth* is thrown away and is pure waste of time and energy if it leaves out of its reckoning all attempts to learn the wisdom and understanding of which Solomon said: "With all thy learning get understanding."

Neither great learning, nor intellectuality alone, can achieve the task of this search for wisdom. Solomon himself may be regarded for these purposes as a mythical character, representing the Great Sun of Wisdom after which he was called. "The wisdom of Solomon" meant the wisdom and the light of the source of the life of this world, the sun of our solar system derived from the Infinite Centre of all life. These rays of physical light and heat are but an expression of the hidden wisdom behind it all.

In rejoicing in life, through all its stages, from youth to old age, let the wise man at all stages open his heart and soul to the reception of the

wisdom which opens men's eyes to see and their hearts to feel the divine influence which comes with the gift of life in the flesh, nourished at every stage by the daily flow of light from the sun. This view of life has many a practical application, as will be illustrated by the attempt made to solve some of the great problems of our modern life, in the light of such small measure of this wisdom as we can bring to bear upon such problems.

Observing that the word "*wealth*" seems to permeate men's thoughts as the *summum bonum* of their lives, this book endeavours to discover what this word means, and whether the term is rightly used in the sense in which it is popularly used, namely, to denote only all that (in the opinion of the materialists) makes life worth living at all. The word "*wealth*" when analysed shows itself as but one ray in a sunbeam. Yet all but a small fraction of human beings consume all but another small fraction of their time, thoughts, and energies in the pursuit of this one fraction of life we call wealth, or at least of as much of it as lies within their reach. This in its turn is the result of the civilisation which compels them to protect themselves against that absence of wealth which we call poverty : a word of horror in its significance arising out of the system of civilisation which tolerates the levy of rent payable to a man by his brother men from their Mother Earth.

The result of this examination of the word "wealth" is quite remarkable, for it renders the puzzles of all political economy unnecessary to worry ourselves about. "Wealth" in its true sense abolishes the problems of political economy. This alone relieves the human mind from one of its heaviest and most artificial burdens. We can breathe again, with a sigh of relief, when we know that there is a better guide to real "wealth" than the dry and inhuman science of political economy.

In fact, we may not unjustly lay a large portion of our wrong thinkings about our own interests and those of our neighbours and rivals, at the doors of this science.

Political economy may produce learned professors, useful in their own line of business, but it cannot produce wise men, useful for all the phases of life, and it is capable of poisoning the very springs of human action by founding them on the selfish instincts of human nature. So that, with this burden off our backs, we may happily set to work to restore the word "wealth" to its real meaning. Then, it illumines our pathway like a beacon from heaven. It becomes for us "the Star in the East," guiding us to the birthplace of a great truth, even though that birthplace be but a "manger" in a stable. This great truth diverts our attention from wealth to peace and health.

Peace and health are as necessary to the body



politic as they are to the individual man. Without them there can be no happiness for nations or individuals.

If disease reigns in either, there we find unrest and discontent, of which just now England is full.

The object of this book is to promote both peace and health in the body politic. In other words, to aim at "well-being" rather than at physical wealth.

It seeks to do this by tracing these symptoms of discontent and unrest to their cause at the roots of our civilisation.

It is intended to examine our civilisation at its roots for these purposes.

The Land Question appears to be at the bottom of it all as we know it to-day : because our land system, which is founded on the legal ownership of land by private individuals, controls the whole of our industries at their source.

That source is the land. No industries of any sort are possible except by the use of the necessary land without which all labour and work is impracticable. It is impossible to work at anything without access to the raw materials of the earth and without the necessary space in which to work. We cannot live in the air or sea. We must live on the land : and so to own the land is to be able to own or control the whole of our industries, and, in great measure,

the lives and fortunes of all men who do the work which makes any civilisation possible.

Thus land has become the source of all our oppositions of interests, and of our social antagonisms. This has destroyed our unity of interests at its foundations, and corrupted our notions of private property and of justice in all departments in human life.

We can only understand the full significance of the Land Question by examining its history.

The history of land-owning—how it came about and its effects on our civilisation—lays bare the facts on which our conclusions are based. An attempt is here made to recall these facts. But this book is written in no hostile spirit to any class of men whether rich or poor, landowners or proletariat.

It is an advocacy of Reform, but not of Revolution by physical force.

The force behind this great question will be the force of higher ideals of human life. It may call for the sacrifice of many self-interests, just as the late war has done. But these self-sacrifices have ennobled the nation which made them—whilst the refusal of them or even the neglect of them has degraded those who have enriched themselves out of the necessities of the nation.

It is happier and better for a nation to win peace at home by moral and spiritual forces, involving

these self-sacrifices, than to conquer the whole world by physical force for its own selfish purposes.

Peace at home is not to be won by physical violence, for peace is a product of men's souls, and not of violence in any shape or form.

As one of the results of the late War—we are faced with an outbreak of discontent amongst our highly paid miners and others.

Behind the claim for higher wages lies the real grievance. It is the private ownership of the coal. This movement threatens the existence of every industry, as well as the lives and comforts of all classes. It is a challenge to our whole civilisation, because it quarrels with the private ownership of the land and its minerals, under the guise of a claim for still higher wages.

Moreover it threatens our ancient constitution of government by King, Lords and Commons, and seeks to establish government by miners and trade unions. The whole force of it—and its danger, lies in the injustice of private land-owning. Remove this injustice, and the whole moral force of the movement collapses. The miners could then become co-operators with all other industries (even with capital itself) in the unification of all the conflicting interests which at present are tearing the nation to pieces.

Such is the point of view from which this great Land Question is approached.

This point of view embraces all politics of every shade of opinion, all religions, and all classes of men. It is an effort to unify the hearts and interests of all men by a comprehensive view of these things as seen by a detached spectator, whose outside position always enables such a spectator to see "the most of the game."

From the same point of view arises another conclusion of vital importance.

It is this : when the seething mass of human life which constitutes the mass of the nation, struggling for existence in the midst of the foul atmosphere of strife, discord, fierce competition, success and failure, health and sickness, good fortune and ill, suffering and selfishness—when such a nation arises from its darkness to see itself not only as the aggregate of the temporary inhabitants of physical bodies on this earth but as ever living spirits which no death can extinguish, then will arise the conviction that no self-sacrifice of their physical nature and interests can be too great if it achieves the real object of their lives here. What this real object is appears to be (again from the same point of view) to regard life here as a preliminary training for life hereafter, where the principles on which we have exercised our divine gift of free will here, shall be responsible for our qualification to its exercise hereafter. This is the great responsibility for all

men and for all nations, that they shall qualify themselves for the great task of taking their proper share of responsibility and of activity in the government of the world, under the guidance of the "hierarchy of Heaven" and under conditions of life which shall be independent of all *wealth*, but which will consist of a well-being which shall reveal wealth as a false lure to the happiness which we all seek to find here—in vain.

On this feature of life a dream is indulged in by this book, for, in the view of the author, dreams of the future are often the preliminary process to the realisation of the most solid facts of human life.

In any case, they are the source of more peace than all the vain attempts of legislation to achieve peace by Acts of Parliament, or by any other paper regulations or political constitutions unless these things are the result and consequences of a previous change in the spirit of the inner man.

The nation that has no vision must perish for want of that light which lighteth every man who seeks it. With the birth of a great national vision a nation will need no revolutions to teach it the happiness of peace. Such a nation will seek a new sort of civilisation which will produce peace in men's hearts, just as now our present civilisation breeds war, strife and discontent.

Occult science has a great message to the whole world by altering the point of view from which we

look at life. It reveals the Land Question as the fundamental question of our present civilisation for reasons which will appear, in due course of our investigation.

This book is not a treatise on occult science, but it aims at applying the revelations of occult science to the problems of our lives.

It advocates the nationalisation of the land and its minerals because land and its minerals are the produce of Nature and not the product of human effort. It does not advocate the nationalisation of any human industry because human industry it is believed is best carried on by private effort. For this reason it advocates the nationalisation of the coal, but not of the mining industry, of land but not of agriculture, or of any other industry that produces wealth from the raw materials of the earth. These things are regarded as the rightful domain of human labour and of the capital involved, and represent private interests and not public property.

There are trusts, as we shall see, attaching to both public and private property; but the trusts of public property can only be exercised by the nation. The trusts attaching to personal property can only be exercised by the individual. In both cases the responsibility for the exercise of these trusts lies upon the owner of each respectively.

The private owner cannot shift his responsibility to the nation, or the nation to the private owner.

The distinction is well recognised by the law, in the difference between the laws of real and of personal property.

This distinction recognises the fundamental difference between the two kinds of property concerned, but the law allows the private ownership of both.

From the point of view of philosophy and history, this is the fundamental mistake of our civilisation, but the objections to private property in land have no application to private property in the work of man's hands, and from all experience the trusts attaching to this latter form of wealth are best left to the private responsibility of the private owners so far as the organisation and management of the industry is concerned.

Nationalisation is here advocated as applicable to nothing else than real property. Industries may require some sort of national control where the lives and well-being of the workers are concerned in the organisation of the industry, but that is quite a different thing from the ownership and working of the industry by the nation itself.

Since *wealth* is the object of industry, it is important to understand what wealth really is. To that question, we must turn our first attention.

## CHAPTER I

### WHAT IS WEALTH?

It was an ill day for us all when our habits of thinking turned the use of the word *Wealth* into meaning material riches. Wealth really means "well-being," and a perverted usage of the word has made the riches of an individual or of a nation stand for the "well-being" of the parties concerned. But Riches do not stand for human welfare: often quite the contrary. This is only one indication of the way in which a corrupt civilisation infects the thoughts of men at their fountain head. It poisons their very language. The pure water of life is thereby tainted with this infection from the hour of our birth onwards through life. It will continue to be thus tainted unless some fortunate chance enables men to amend and purge their minds from the misuse of their language, for this will mean the purgation of their minds from false ways of thinking. Such a chance has come to us now; for men's minds have been staggered by the horrors of war and they are open to see now the horrors of peace, which formerly



seemed to be the natural order of human existence. These times of peace are full of wealth and poverty, but not of well-being.

The horrors of peace are as great in suffering as any war can produce, though in less concentrated form. They can be seen and heard any day in our police courts, our law courts and our magisterial system of justice. In our hospitals, asylums, infirmaries and other attempts to alleviate human sufferings by public or private charities, we may come into close touch with the horrors of peace. It is true that accidents cannot be eliminated from human life, though even these can be and are lessened by human regulations against the selfish carelessness of employers of other men's labour and lives, and by hospitals to alleviate their sufferings.

But the sum total of human suffering in times of profoundest peace is only less staggering than those in times of war, because it is less widely known or realised, and has no "special correspondents" to record it all in our newspapers, nor has it the halo of glory which surrounds a field of battle.

Yet these horrors of peace are proof that neither money nor prosperity are successful in securing the real wealth of a nation. The horrors of peace are hidden from the public conscience because they are painful and dull. No special correspondent of enterprising newspapers would dare to wreck the

fortunes of a journal by recording them with appropriate conclusions as to the "well-being" of a nation.

Such is the attitude of our standard of life to all this. Of the latest news about wealth in the shape of money or trade, our newspapers are full to repletion.

Of wealth as something besides riches or money the nation knows nothing, and seems to desire to know as little as possible. "There is no money in it," and that is sufficient to make it unpopular and uninteresting in a world where wealth is measured by money. Yet nothing is of more importance to a nation than the "well-being" of its citizens. Every one wants happiness and peace as the foundation of their lives. This goes to prove that all avoidable human suffering or discontent is an injury to the whole nation quite apart from all the so-called "wealth" of a nation.

Real wealth is not money-wealth. Money can relieve, but cannot cure misery at its core. We need something that can raise the human being above the delusions of money-wealth; it must be something which renders money a means to this end and not the end itself. This means a complete revolution in all our ways of thinking and of acting towards one another. In other words, this means a revolution in our civilisation.

Once persuade a nation that its happiness lies

in the welfare of its people all round then there will be some chance of recovering the loss of the real meaning of "wealth." With this recovery a nation would regain its common sense, and with its common sense it would regain its intelligence and its inspiration. Towards this recovery, the progress of human development is now struggling onwards.

"Let us clear our minds of cant."

Our present discontents are concerned mostly with money. Men aim at more money and less work in all departments of human industry. Is this a cure of their discontent?

How can it be this? For has any one yet found the financial success in life which cries "Hold!" "Enough!" and gives content? Is not money the real summit of our ambitions? Is it not the road to honours, to rewards, to public position, to fame, to power, and influence?

For these things we spend our lives in a ghastly struggle and we call it "success in life" if we win. Our competitors fall by our side in tens of thousands on our road to success; and we think our charities can secure our "well-being" and theirs.

It is like the disastrous retreat of Napoleon I. from Moscow. The survivors may rejoice, but the fallen have paid the price with their lives. These Moscow expeditions are going on every day in our business world; our charities both public

and private are proof that our success involves the downfall of tens of thousands of the unsuccessful. The fate of the unsuccessful is the proof that neither success nor money means the real welfare of the parties concerned.

What then is this "well-being"?

Even for a dog, it means food, warmth, shelter and the training of his intelligence. Too much food with too little exercise is ruinous to the dog's health and character. For a man the same truth holds good.

You must know the nature of the man before you can understand his "welfare." Whatever his individual character may be, there is no man who has lost his capacity for that. It is the gift of Nature to all men. To develop this capacity is the true aim of education. To teach him his own real welfare is the highest ideal of education. To fulfil it is his real success in life. Money cannot do it alone, but money can corrupt the man to the very foundations of his existence.

Work, intelligence, skill, training with all the discipline of mind, body and soul, which these things involve, are the real elements of his happiness.

Man is a complex animal requiring all the skill and discipline of the profoundest minds to guide to his own well-being. The real man is the thoughts within him, for "As a man thinketh in his heart,

so he is." Therefore to train a child to think truly is to make him a success in his life.

Man does not yet know himself, and the whole influence of our present civilisation tends to corrupt his thoughts about himself, or about the meaning of his life, from his earliest infancy.

The education of a man involves not only development of his physical body in health and strength, but the far more difficult process of developing his habits of thinking. Since the days of Pythagoras, the greatest problem of life has always been for a man to "know himself."

In these days, men are waking up to the consciousness that they are something more than their bodies, that there is a spirit within them which keeps the heart beating, but which does not cease with the decay of the mechanism of the heart, but throbs with renewed vigour when freed from the physical body.

The evidence of a man like St. Paul, who speaks of the new body after the physical body ceases to hold the personality of the "dead man," and calls it a spiritual body, is but one link in a long chain of evidence from time immemorial to the present day, proving the reality of the inner man.

No jury of sane men could ignore such evidence, even though no demonstration of it could be given in a Court of Justice.

The day of what is called "miracles," but which

is really the day of new revelations of man's nature and composition, is already dawning on a generation corrupted by its ideas of "wealth."

The development of the Spirit of Life within every man is being revealed again as the real wealth of all humanity. When this conviction has penetrated into the hearts of the people, there will follow such a revolution in their thoughts about themselves as the world has never yet seen.

For if a man's welfare is something else than riches or wealth, is not the same thing true of the nation?

Political economists talk about wealth as if neither the individual nor the nation had any solid interest in anything except the production of riches. These riches are founded on the institution of private property, so we must consider what private property means.

## CHAPTER II

### WHAT IS PRIVATE PROPERTY?

FROM the point of view indicated in the last chapter private property may be said to be the rights of an individual to everything necessary for his well-being in body, mind, and spirit. As man did not make himself, nor the necessities of this existence, so he is born with a claim on all the powers of heaven and earth to put the necessities of life within the reach of his own labour of hands and brain. He could not have been sent to this world by the Great Architect of the Universe to be crushed out of his life and out of his desire for happiness without a chance of a better fate. If he errs and ruins his career by drink or crime or thriftlessness or idleness, it is in nine cases out of ten the fault of the civilisation under which he has grown up. If we deny him a full share of his claim to "happiness" it is because we know not nor understand either his nature or our own. It is destructive of our own highest welfare and happiness that a single man, woman or child should be brought up under conditions of life

which predestine him or any citizen of the State to a life of squalor, dirt, ignorance, or disease. Our gutter-children are not only a danger to the State, but an everlasting dishonour and disgrace to our civilisation. Charities can only pick up some of the wounded in this eternal warfare which we call peace. Charities which do not produce real peace at home by fulfilling the claims of every man to his rightful chances in life, are only a cloak to hide our own ignorance of ourselves as well as of him.

This consideration makes the claim of an individual as wide as his necessities, limited only by the similar necessities of every other man. These claims are not conflicting but co-operative. It is every man's business to satisfy them.

The man-made laws of England recognise no such claim.

According to these laws, private property is entirely independent of other men's necessities. Lawful possession is not only nine-tenths of the law. It is also the remaining tenth; and the law has its own limited views of what lawful possession means. This law is but an expression of our civilisation. We have seen how this fountain of justice is corrupted at its source.

It is natural that our laws should be but the expression of our own stage of development.

The first attempt to arrive at a higher stage



must be directed to amending our laws about private property. Even the limitation of "private property" to the produce of a man's own labour of mind or body would not meet the case completely, for every man is more or less responsible for the welfare of his fellow man. His own welfare is not consistent with the neglect of the welfare of others.

It should be impossible to enjoy the luxuries or refinements of our civilisation so long as any class of men were living in the poverty which it has produced for the large majority of the nation. This is the real burden of our modern lives in an age of gross materialistic views of wealth and of private property.

What, then, should be our ideas of private property?

Private property now means the exclusive possession of a share, limited or unlimited, of the necessities and luxuries of this physical life. But Nature gives the only means of acquiring private property. To some she gives health and strength of body and mind. To others intellect and powers of thinking or acting, or of influencing others by gifts of speech or writing or of discovery.

The law recognises them all and also other means of acquiring lawful possession of riches and honour. Even possession by force and lapse of time legalises possession. Our history is full

of such origin of riches and honours, as we shall presently see. Upon such possessions the law casts no public or private duty beyond that of paying taxes. The successful of past generations, no matter by what means that success was obtained, are enabled to hand down their private property by will or deed of settlement to the succeeding generations of their family or friends. It is true that the law limits such bequests or settlements to descendants born or gestated within the lifetime of the settlor (and for twenty-one years after), but by the ingenuity of the lawyers in the matter of "re-settlements" the legal limitations against perpetuities are evaded and the law enables a man to tie up his private property, real or personal, within these limits, on his descendants from generation to generation, practically without limit.

And thus the successful in life can secure for their own limited class the results of their success for all future generations. The law thus protects a class in its entrenched stronghold of private property, from all the work and worry by which the rest of the community is compelled to struggle for their bare existence.

That is the system under which we are living to this day; and in this we may easily find the source and origin of our present troubles with labour and the wage-receiving classes.

In all this, there is an entire absence of any

conception of duty (except the necessity of paying taxes), in return for the protection by law of private property.

Is it to be wondered at that the working classes fail to recognise any duty on their part, to the State or the interests of the community, in the exercise of their power to paralyse the industry and production of the whole community by lightning strikes or other ways of asserting themselves?

The consideration of other people's welfare is absent from the standard of our present laws relating to private property. Therein lies the condemnation of this standard. It recognises no inherent public trusts in either real or personal property; whilst it gives almost unlimited powers to the owners of property either real or personal to create private trusts, irrespective of public interests.

It teaches us all that (within very wide limits of sanity) a man may do as he likes with his own property. Gifts by will are in the case of real property alone, barred against religious or charitable institutions, for special reasons, of which the main reason is that there was a considerable danger of the whole land of England falling into the possession of the Church. Subject to this, the law allows a man to do as he likes with his own, beyond the demands of taxation during his life, and death duties on his dispositions by will. There is no

recognition beyond these limitations of any public duty to the community. It is this teaching of our laws which lies at the bottom of our present and past social troubles. Private interests have entirely eclipsed public duties and responsibilities, with the result that the private interests of the working classes, now organised into trade unions, are in deadly conflict with the private interests of landowners and capitalists and so threaten to bring our country into ruin and disaster for all.

The Labour question is approaching its crisis, because it is the turn of labour to assert its own selfish interests in the same way in which the similar selfish interests of the landowner and capitalist have asserted themselves in past times.

The fundamental blame for all this lies not on either landlords or capitalists or the working classes. It lies on the teaching of our civilisation; of which teaching we shall have occasion to observe in the course of this investigation, the origin and growth of it all; by some notable examples and illustrations from history.

We are all the helpless victims of the public standard of life and conduct under which we live, and we can only escape from its consequences by learning the lessons of its breakdown in modern times.

## CHAPTER III

### AN APPEAL TO OUR MOTHER EARTH

At this point let us turn to Nature, our Mother Earth, to inquire of her what her views are about private property. From her our bodies came, with her we live every hour of our lives, and to her we shall return so far as our physical life and our material riches are concerned.

Will she not enlighten us?

She is not responsible for the muddle-headed attempts of our law-makers to achieve the welfare of humanity.

So let us hark back to the fundamental basis of our physical lives—the earth—for instruction and for illumination.

We ask her : What is the natural foundation of private property?

What else can it be but her own great gifts to mankind? *First*, physical life itself. Next, all that makes physical life worth living; and next, the great fact, now being only gradually realised, that life itself is the great bond of unity between all men and between the Giver of life and those to

whom it is given. The earth (and all its riches) is but the agent of its Maker to produce and maintain our physical life. Can there, then, be any private property at all vested in any individual man except as a trustee for the welfare of others?

If so, what is it? For no man made the earth and no man created life.

His gifts of body or mind? Are they not held in trust also? Or are they given solely for a man's own benefit?

His position of place, power and influence?

Is it not meant for the help and welfare of others?

His great possessions?

Are they his own private property to be used for his own pleasure or satisfaction, however degraded his tastes may be as he wills or chooses?

Is there no trust in them for others who have no possessions at all?

Is there, then, nothing at all belonging to a man in the sense used by the law as his private property?

No—nothing—not even his own soul: nor the responsibility for his own ignorance. Even that is shared by his fellow men.

His very life is not his to misuse or destroy.

This, too, is held in trust for others.

Naked he came into the world—naked he will leave it. As Carlyle pointed out long years ago—

man is physically a naked animal : strip him of his clothes and you have Carlyle's vision of a " naked Duke of Windlestraw addressing a naked House of Lords."

All the rest of the man's possessions and clothing is a necessary conventionality, no matter who or what he is.

He owes his very clothes to other men's work, labour and skill.

Himself he owes to no man, but he does owe himself to his Maker.

Then where does his private property come in? Are we all to live without private possessions?

The only private property we can claim seems to be the private responsibility for the use of our own body, the necessities of our existence, and the private responsibility for the enlightenment of our own souls.

From this point of view life itself is a great trust. And when we come to examine life itself from the point of view of philosophy, we find that this trust must extend backwards to its source from its Giver, and onwards to our reunion with Him.

All the rest is education from experience. This particular phase of existence on earth is only a most minute fraction of the whole of our existence.

The progress of a human soul through the ramifications of matter appears to be the discipline of life here to qualify us for higher stages of existence

with higher work. If we are really the servants and messengers of the Most High, we are here, not to expend our great gifts in grasping at the wealth of the world, but to render easier, both for ourselves and others, the passage of our souls and theirs through the ordeal of this life in the flesh.

The messages from those who have crossed the valley and river of death are getting clearer every day. Soon we shall be able to read not only "the message from Mars," but the message from living spirits in our own hearts.

Nay, further, we shall learn more of our own power to control the evil things that disturb or paralyse our efforts towards the light of this truth.

There are powers within the human soul that can move mountains and control the winds of heaven. There was One on earth Who did it. One Who healed diseases and fed multitudes with bread and fish.

Nor was He the only one, for He promised that mortal man should be able to do greater works than His. The time for the fulfilment of this promise will come when man understands himself and the power of the will of man to make or mar his destiny.

So that in the light of such views of life as these, the fierce struggle amongst men for the rights of private property is nothing but a misconception



of man's real nature. No paper scheme of socialism, democracy, or communism can remedy this. Rest and peace can only come upon the world from the spirit of every man who seeks the light of truth in the surrender of himself and of all his private possessions to the will and guidance of the Great Architect of the Universe.

Meanwhile, with such thoughts in our minds, it is our task to clear away the delusions of material wealth. With them will go the whole of the slums and hovels of our cities and villages, and the willing services of the hand workers of the nation will be enlisted in co-operative union with the brains and experience of the captains of our industries and the capital of the investors. "Public service" will supplant "private interests" as the motives for work of head and of body when man really knows his own constitution.

Conflicting claims to money-wealth will disappear just in proportion to the recognition of our responsibility for one another's life and happiness in a world where nothing but a sense of unity all round can unite our efforts towards a great and common uplifting of our inmost souls towards a great common end.

In short, it would appear from these considerations that private property should at least be limited to the results of a man's own skill and industry and brains, but even this should, in turn,

be limited to the reasonable satisfaction of his tastes and ideals of life and comfort, whilst the power to pass on his private property to succeeding generations should be regarded as detrimental to them, if such property be beyond the reasonable necessities of their lives, according to their own education and attainments. To become a millionaire is quite detrimental enough to the man himself, but to allow him to create a race of millionaires who inherit the results of his skill and brains without his qualifications and without his work or his skill, or his brains or energy, is to allow him to deprive them all of all that is good in his great example, and to reduce them to the position of parasites on the commonwealth such as all men are who live in ease and luxury without any work or human effort.

Private property thus appears to be but a concession to human weakness. It is necessary to make this concession on such terms that it shall not corrupt the instinct of the human soul towards the absolute unity of life and interests of all humanity. Guarded by the recognition of the right of every human being from childhood onwards, to the free gift of all the necessities of life and of his development by the training and education necessary to enable him to fill his or her place in the industry of production of all the means of well-being, the recognition of the rights of private property beyond

these things should be limited to the results of a man's own work and industry, and for his lifetime only and not for his descendants.

This would not destroy the incentives to work, but it would inspire all work with that spirit of unity of interests which has been so unhappily destroyed by our present money-making form of civilisation.

It is hard to escape from the fatal teachings of the God of Mammon who rules this world so powerfully at present, but the deliverance of the world from his clutches will be the emancipation of humanity from the horrors of peace as well as of war: it will be the entry of the human race into the higher planes of their destiny, even during their course of experience in the dark realms of matter.

After all, the human race is here to work out its own salvation by its own efforts, but until the desire is aroused to make these efforts, the help and guidance, the strength, wisdom and power which lies waiting in the human soul for exercise, will remain unknown and disbelieved until it is drawn down from heaven by those who believe in it, because they have tried it, and they know.

When the rights of private property shall be brought into harmony with the laws of Nature, which have given us life and all its necessities, then the human race will be lifted up beyond the miser-

able conceptions of life as it is lived to-day. Then we shall realise that real *Wealth* is not money or goods, or private property, but the well-being of the commonwealth under whatever form of Government may best achieve it.

## CHAPTER IV

### WHAT PRIVATE PROPERTY IN LAND REALLY MEANS

IF the whole institution of private property, even private property in the work of a man's own hands and labour, is rightly open to such criticism as above expressed, and if it requires such limitations as have been suggested, what can we think of the system of private property in the land on which we were born and reared, and by which all men must live, or, for want of which, all men unable to obtain access to it must either perish or become the economic slaves of those who claim the private ownership of our native country?

Human greed, tyranny, oppression and barbarity have found their natural expression all over the world in the institution of private property in land.

The gifts of power of mind or body to the few have been used throughout all history to the enslavement and oppression of the many, by the institution of private property in land.

Not until this twentieth century has there ever dawned upon the human race the hope of any freedom from this great source of the corruption of human education. Not that private ownership of land as it exists to-day has any special moral blame attaching to it, beyond its inherent evil as a national institution of the State. It has become merely a form of investment, often of mere speculation on the level of a gamble on the Stock Exchange. But as gambling in corn or food is a reprehensible form of speculation, so gambling in land is open to the same objection.

Gambling for profit in the necessities of existence, whether it be in land which produces food, or in the food when produced, is a method of earning a livelihood which would be tolerated by no higher standard of conduct than that which has grown up under the influence of our system of private ownership of land.

The whole system is a disguised form of taxation on the community by private individuals. It has created for landowners, without work, that wealth which it is the aim and object of all work and labour to create for the maintenance of life.

When the springs of living waters, by which alone man can live at all, are drained at their source by private individuals, then we may always expect to see wealth in the hands of the few and poverty the lot of the many.

This process has been aggravated by our land laws, which have gradually made land-owning become the type of the most respectable method of living without work, whilst giving to the private owners the control over the lives and fortunes of the tenants and toilers of the soil.

To become the owners of a tax on the nation, and the control of other men's lives and fortunes on landed estates, has been hitherto the special privilege of our most ancient and highly honoured landed aristocracy. Their dignity as well as their income have grown steadily up to this date. Their example has created a host of imitators.

Their modern imitators find themselves frequently without either the dignity or the profit of such a position: for few land-owners can support the burden of agricultural estates under modern conditions, or the upkeep of large country houses and mansions, unless they are fed by the stream of taxation levied by their ownership of urban land within the influence of some great or some rising town; or unless, as in most cases of the imitators, they are supported by wealth earned in some successful business and can afford to act the part of a beneficent and generous landlord only because he has independent means acquired by his own work and enterprise.

The older the family property of the landowner, the closer is his connection with the past

history of land-owning, and the larger is the total of the sum levied by him and his ancestors on the industry of the nation.

If such representatives of our most ancient families were asked to value their estates as at the time when their ancestors acquired them, even with all due allowance for the capital spent by them or their ancestors on the property, they would learn something of the amount of taxation on the growth of the community by which they and their ancestors have been able to maintain the dignity of their position and titles.

It might then occur to such men to think that they owe all that they have, and all that they are, to the community by whose labours they have supported their dignity for long generations past.

It might perhaps also occur to them that they have some responsibility for the poverty of the workers for generations past, and it should not surprise them if the nation should at last take measures to levy some counter public taxation on their own long-established form of private taxation. This is but a method now called "taxation of land values" which is looming in the near future.

When it comes such men will be able better to understand the justice of such a tax.

Thus, private property in land is seen to be a



disguised form of taxation on the industry of the country, a method of living and consuming wealth without work or responsibility to any one, and also a method of self-aggrandisement in elevating the owner of land into the position of the owner of the lives and destinies of the peasants who till the soil and are obliged to live under the control of the landlord in the cottages on the estate.

All this leads us to see the great truths about the land; that it was made by no man and can belong to no man; that it is our greatest national asset—next only to the population itself; and that its value depends on the work and labour of the population. It is the greatest necessity of human life, and the source of all that makes human life possible or endurable. Life itself demands that the free gifts of Nature should be free to all who will spend their labour and toil in working up the raw materials of Nature into the comforts and necessities of all human existence.

For the private individual to step in between Nature and her gifts to all men, is to outrage her beneficence, and to produce poverty for the people and riches for the violator of Nature's laws. Hence all the tears of past generations. Hence, also, all our greatest woes and troubles of to-day.

Neither Capital nor Labour can ever obtain a lasting peace between them until they cease to

violate the laws of Nature which alone can unify their interests.

We are told just now that increased production of wealth can alone save the nation from financial disaster. Nothing but the unification of all contesting interests by the reclamation of the land from private ownership can ever create this increased production of wealth, for man from the highest to the lowest ranks of life is an animal with a living soul within him, and can only be led by spiritual forces to face the duties of his existence. No man will produce his best work, even at high wages, unless he can feel that he will thereby help his fellow workers. His springs of action lie within the control of the spirit within him. Unify these high motives by recognition of them—then the whole man is enlisted in the service of humanity for all he is worth; and our civilisation reaches a higher plane and level of thought.

This is illustrated by the attitude of the coal-miners, with whom the country has had so much trouble lately. The miners have declared their willingness to increase their output without further increase of wages (beyond the increase of the prices of commodities) if the public, and not the private coal-owners, are to benefit by their increased labour.

In similar manner every man will do his utmost

to produce "wealth" when he knows that he is working for the community—and that the community is working for him.

It is the selfishness and the limited views of ourselves, taught us from our childhood by the atmosphere of our laws, which has so deeply corrupted the springs of human action. The origin of it all lies in our godless institution of private property in land.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ORIGIN OF OUR SYSTEM OF PRIVATE PROPERTY IN LAND

THE consideration of the origin of our system of private property in land plunges us at once into a period of history when the human race had not yet conceived the very elements of justice.

The whole of our system of land-owning may be summed up in a few words :

It is a system originally founded on force and violence, murder and rapine, oppression and injustice, robbery and plunder. These are the conceptions which lie at the root of our land system. There are no words which can adequately describe the violence and cruelty involved in the origin and history of this system. The whole institution appears historically to be an outrage on Nature and a crime against humanity.

The "land" has always been the lure which has made this earth the scene of bloodshed and warfare from the earliest history of mankind.

Man is essentially a land animal. He must live on the land, and by the land, or perish. Therefore

the possession of the land has always been the object of endless warfare. The issue of this warfare has always been this: for the victors, the land; for the conquered, slavery; with tillage of the land by the slaves for the conquerors.

That was the issue involved in the Norman Conquest of England; that was its result. This result is embodied in our standards of life and conduct to this day. We call it—civilisation.

The whole meaning of these early wars was derived from the absolute necessity of the land for the existence of the race of man. From the land comes all “wealth”—and the land is as necessary to human life as the sea is for the life of every herring or other fish that inhabit the sea in countless myriads.

Food, clothing, warmth, shelter, houses, whether palaces or hovels—all the necessities and all the luxuries of life for which men have slaughtered one another or reduced the weaker to slavery—everything we possess (except our souls) comes from the bountiful bosom of our Mother Earth.

The human soul itself has been smothered up in the savage warfare for possession of the land, so fierce is the instinct of life for the land on which alone life is possible.

The very tigers who embody the spirit of mercilessness have not been more fierce or merciless than the men who founded our land system in England.

Yet William, the Conqueror of England, showed himself to be at least an intelligent tiger. He was gifted with common sense, which showed him that to hold his conquests he must give his slaves, the conquered, some interest in their holdings of the land.

The institution of his manorial system protected the interests of the tillers of the soil to some extent. The feudal system was essentially a system of military defence. It was founded on oaths of fealty, allegiance and duty to the State, as we shall presently see.

“ Enfeoffment with livery of seisin ” was nothing more nor less than delivery of possession of the land to the tenant on a personal oath of allegiance on certain defined terms of trust.

The same is true of all sub-infeudations. These were practically sub-leases, as we should call them now. But from the first owner downwards to the last sub-feudatory, the title to the occupation and possession of the land was a *trust* corresponding to the terms of a lease terminable by the overlord on a breach of the terms of the holding.

Here let Mr. J. R. Green, the author of *The History of the English People*, tell us in his own words the nature of the land constitution of England as founded by the Conqueror :

“ Great or small, each estate held from the Crown was held by its tenant on condition of

military service at the royal call, and when the larger holdings were divided by their owners into smaller sub-tenancies, the under-tenants were bound by the same conditions of service to their lord.

“ ‘Hear, my lord,’ swore the feudal defendant, as kneeling, without arms and bareheaded, he placed his hands within those of his superior, ‘I become liege-man of yours for life and limb and earthly regard, and I will keep faith and loyalty to you for life and death. God help me!’ ”

By a usage peculiar to England, each sub-tenant, in addition to his oath of fealty to his lord, swore fealty direct to the Crown.

Each tenant was bound to appear if needful thrice a year at the royal court to pay a heavy fine or rent on succession to his estate, and “aid in money in case of the King’s capture in war,” etc., with other obligations called “wardship and marriage.”

“All manors, too, were burthened with their own customs or special dues to the Crown, and it was for the purpose of ascertaining and recording these that William sent into each the commissioners whose inquiries are preserved in Domesday Book.”

Such is the testimony of Mr. Green on this

subject. But now these oaths of fealty are gone, along with all the ancient process and formalities of transfer of the land, in all of which the oaths of fealty were renewed.

Now, land is transferred by a deed of grant (engrossed on parchment for safety against decay), and every vestige of the position of the Overlord of all the Land—the Sovereign of the Realm—has been carefully ignored by centuries of landlord legislation.

But during all these centuries the tillers of the soil have had no one to represent their interests. Yet they had definite rights, amongst which was the right to use vast tracts of common land for their own maintenance.

The slaves tilled the soil for their owners, but were given rights over the common-lands provided by their masters. In this fashion was established, as the foundation of our civilisation, the principle on which it has been worked ever since, namely: the right of the strong and powerful to compel the weak and oppressed to produce “wealth” from the earth by their labour and toil for the benefit of the owners of the land, with just so much for the workers out of their own labours as was necessary for their own subsistence.

Out of this system has grown the division of the nation into “classes,” separated from one another by the “whole diameter of being,” the workers



by hand or brain on the one hand, the capitalist and the loafers and parasites of society on the other, living on other men's toils and labours, producing nothing, but consuming all things in prodigal profusion.

For these last classes of men, the unhappy earth is made to groan with injustice. Against this system "the masses" are now in revolt against "the classes" who support it. Labour has now come within reach of political power, and the first exercise of its power will be the abolition of the system of private property in land upon which the whole of our present civilisation is founded.

The land could tell us how it has groaned for centuries past under this system. It could tell us how it could have made us all happy, industrious and contented under more righteous conditions; how the possessors have taken possession not only of the land as owners, but of men's lives who owned no land. In truth, the landowners have taken possession historically of the British Constitution itself, which they have used for their own ends, to pervert or ignore the great principle of the "trusts of the land" laid down by the Conqueror.

In effect, we find to-day that the fundamental principles of the English land-laws have been either diverted, or twisted or ignored by the land-lord parliaments of past times, so that every

vestige of the ancient trusts has disappeared, and all this in spite of the protests of all the greatest legal authorities, as embodied in their works from Blackstone, down to Sir Joshua Williams and Sir Frederick Pollock. In the Appendix will be found the law as expounded by them.

Thus the private landowners of England have been enabled to maintain their superiority, and their predominance in the councils and government of the country down to this twentieth century. It matters nothing to them now that their claim to private ownership is illegal and unconstitutional. They have established their claims by long centuries of their own self-interested legislation. Their claims have become huge vested interests of great antiquity: great cities have been built on their private possessions; enormous fortunes have fallen into their idle hands created by the industry of the nation in its growth, which has turned barren acres into plots worth, in some cases, three millions of pounds sterling per acre as bare sites for buildings in our great cities.

The story of the land is the story of the acquisition of unearned wealth by the landed classes, and it is the story of the great tragedies by which the land-owning classes crushed all attempts to upset their privileged position by ruthless massacre of men they called "rebels." Such a tragedy was the rebellion known in English history as the

“peasants’ revolt” of the fourteenth century. The details of this rebellion and of other subsequent revolts against our land system and the horrors of it all can be read in the pages of Mr. Green’s history and elsewhere.

The full significance of these struggles by past generations of Englishmen to win back the freedom of the land from private ownership does not appear even yet to have been adequately appreciated by the present generation. Yet they are the records of as great self-sacrifice and heroism by the poor, ignorant and oppressed peasants of England as can be matched by any records of the late war.

Heroism is measured by failure and death as often as by success and victory. Else many acts of heroism in the late war would have remained undecorated by the Victoria Cross.

These men shed their blood in past centuries undecorated and unsung, in the same cause of freedom for which we honour the memory of the fallen heroes of the great war of the twentieth century.

The English people of this generation have shown themselves to be heroes still, and have a just claim to demand that, in the words of our most modern of Prime Ministers, “England shall be made a fit place for heroes to live in.” The only difference between these ancient heroes of

the land and our own modern heroes is that the oppressors of the past day and generation were the predecessors (in title to the land) of our own modern landlords at home, whilst the enemy of to-day in the twentieth century was the Kaiser William of Germany and his horde of plunderers.

Yet the freedom of the descendants of the oppressed of past centuries is still the same great cause of freedom to-day. The heroes of the past all deserve the same honour that is given to the heroes of to-day. In both cases there is great danger lest their sacrifices should not meet with their deserved reward. For these reasons it is necessary to interrupt this consideration of the modern Land Question by a short historical sketch of what this same Land Question meant for our ancestors.

It is necessary to equip our minds with some of the elementary facts of our own past history relating to our own land of England.

There is a sub-conscious mind of a nation as well as of an individual. The history of the past is working out its nemesis in the present both in the nation and in the individuals of which the nation is composed. It matters little that we have forgotten our own past history or the history of the country. The sub-conscious mind of the individual and of the nation has forgotten nothing. The law of cause and effect operates in both cases

in never-ending vibrations of thought, creating their own corresponding acts and character. The English people have inherited their sentiments of outraged freedom and justice from the facts recorded in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VI

### A SHORT HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE LAND QUESTION

#### THE BLACK DEATH, IN 1384

“IN 1384 England was visited by the most appalling plague in her history, which swept away more than half her inhabitants, then numbering three or four millions. There arose an urgent demand for labourers to till the soil. Harvests rotted on the ground and fields were left untilled, and wages rose rapidly.” This is Mr. Green’s description of it in his own words.

The parliament of landlords which had been for centuries accustomed to regard labour as we regard it now—that is, as a commodity to be bought in a slave market at the lowest price that starving men will accept rather than starve—then enacted the Statutes of Labour, 1349 and 1350, fixing the price of labour and tying it to the soil. The labourer became a serf to be branded with a hot iron if he ran away.

Then began the first recorded attempt of labourers to free themselves from the tyranny of the landlords.

“It was in the preaching of John Ball,” says J. R. Green (1877 to 1881), “that England first listened to the knell of feudalism and the declaration of the rights of man.”

“Good people,” cried the preacher, “things will never go well in England so long as goods be not in common. . . .

“By what right are they whom we call lords greater folk than we are? On what grounds have they deserved it? Why do they hold us in serfage? . . . They are clothed in velvet and warm in their furs and their ermines, while we are covered with rags. They have wine and spices and fair bread: and we, oat cakes and straw, and water to drink. They have leisure and fine houses. We have pain and labour—the rain and the wind in the fields. And yet it is of us and of our toil that these men hold their state.”

It was the tyranny of landed property that then, as ever since, has roused the defiance of the people. Separate “the people” from “the land,” and you thereby separate Mother Earth from her children and produce the recurring tragedy of our Western civilisation.

In 1878 a poll tax on every man’s head, whether the poorest or the wealthiest, to pay for a disastrous war with France, “set England on fire from sea to sea,” says J. R. Green. The Poll Tax was the match that set on fire the slumbering

discontent of the children of the soil of England, inflamed by John Ball, maddened by the Statutes of Labourers, and the loss of their ancient manorial rights handed down from the great Conqueror, needing only a spark to kindle a conflagration. This led to the first agrarian revolution in English history, but it was not the last. It is, indeed, doubtful if this generation of the twentieth century has yet seen the last protest against our system of land-owning, or the inequitable taxation of everything except the land. This one, led by Wat Tyler, was quenched in the blood of the people; also not for the last time.

J. R. Green tells us that "the revolt spread like wildfire over the country. Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge, and Hertfordshire rose in arms—from Sussex and Surrey the insurrection extended as far as Winchester."

The jingle of the rhymes of the rebel pamphlets express clearly enough, says J. R. Green again, "their longing for a right rule; for plain and simple justice; their scorn for the immorality of the nobles and the infamy of the Court; *their resentment of the perversion of the law to the cause of oppression.*"

Mr. Green's words, here emphasised by italics, suggest their appropriate application to the modern discontent with the position of modern land-owners. Also these following words are noteworthy as



expressing the feelings of the peasants: "Every lawyer who fell into their hands was put to death—not till all these were killed would the land enjoy its old freedom again."

This was the cry of the peasants as they fired the houses of the stewards and flung the records of the manor courts into the flames.

"The stately palace of John of Gaunt at the Savoy, the new Inn of Lawyers at the Temple, the houses of foreign merchants were soon in a blaze. But the insurgents, as they proudly boasted, were seekers of truth and justice, not thieves or robbers: and a plunderer found carrying off a silver vessel from the sack of the Savoy was flung with his spoil into the flames."

It required an army of 40,000 men to quell this rebellion of free Englishmen from the chains of their slavery. The serfs were slaughtered by the thousands, and their blood cries aloud to-day to be remembered.

The Parliament refused the King's suggestion of settling the contest by enfranchising the serfs. The landlords answered his appeal with these words: "Their serfs were their goods: and the King could not take their goods from them but by their own consent."

*Piers the Plowman*, one of the earliest specimens of English literature, is the dirge of the peasants of this period. It was the expression of the

misery which created this tragedy. The same sort of misery is at the bottom of our modern discontent.

The history of the land of England, in short, reveals the fact that William of Normandy, though a ruthless conqueror (whose methods of barbarism have only been recently revived by the Germans in the invasion of Belgium and France), had behind these brutalities something which was entirely lacking in the policy of wanton destruction adopted by the German hordes.

William's policy was the re-settlement of the conquered country, not its destruction.

It was a military conquest by force of arms, but it was also a peaceable settlement of the people, by recognition of their ancient rights of tenure of their own small holdings, aided by large tracts of common land within the manors created by the conquerors.

Of violence by fire and bloodshed there was plenty, as any one may read for himself in the description given of it by Charles Kingsley in that great work *Hereward the Wake*, a book which makes his readers live in the times of which he wrote.

But the manorial system is a standing record of William's care for the peasantry of England.

The subsequent history of England is but a record of the enslavement of the people by the

military nobles in defiance of the ancient rights of the people, given to them by the Conqueror.

Thus England became divided into two great and distinct classes, the owners of land and their slaves. Such is the origin of our ancient landed aristocracy. They are the economic descendants of the owners of the land, the people of England are the economic descendants of their slaves.

The system of enclosure, first of the common pasture, and then of the open fields and town lands of the village which then began, coincided with the suppression of the monasteries by Henry VIII, and the grants to his courtiers of large tracts of land held by some of their descendants to this day.

To these confiscations the country owes the dominancy of the great landlords of to-day, and the origin of many of our wealthy noble families and of their titles.

The dominance and the privileges of the ancient landowners are thus founded first of all on forcible conquest by successful soldiers, and next on the suppression of the rights of the free people of the land, by virtue of the privileged position of the landed aristocracy.

With Henry VIII arose that great curse which we call the poverty of the masses.

Parliament, in the reign of Henry VIII, a parliament like all parliaments till the Reform Acts

of 1832 to 1884, practically confined to landowners, passed an Act "for the punishment of Vagrants and the Relief of the Poor."

These vagrants were the product of Henry VIII's own confiscations of land. Under this Act any person who brings before two justices of the peace "any runagate servant and any other which liveth idle and loitering by the space of three days shall have him for a slave."

The justices of the peace were directed to brand every such man by a hot iron on his breast with the letter V, and to adjudge him to be the slave of the person who brought him for two years, during which time "he shall take such slave and give him bread and water or small drink and refuse meat, and cause him to work by beating, chaining or otherwise, in such work or labour as he shall put him unto, be it never so vile."

If such slave should absent himself within two years for fourteen days, then two justices shall adjudge him to be marked on the forehead or the ball of the cheek with the sign of an S, and further he shall be adjudged to be a slave to his master for ever, and if he runs away a second time, he shall be adjudged a felon (that is, he shall be hanged).

These unhappy vagrants, robbed of their heritage and reduced to slavery by the man who created our modern aristocracy, Henry VIII, were, it is

said, hanged by him to the number of 72,000 persons.

Upon this state of things here is a contemporary opinion by Robert Crowley, afterwards Archdeacon of Hertford: "If the impotent creatures perish for lack of necessities, you are the murderers," says he, "for you have their inheritance. If the sturdy fall to stealing, robbery and revenge, then you are the causers thereof, for you dig in, enclose and withhold from them the earth out of which they should dig and plow their living" (see *An Information and Petition against the Oppressors of the Poor Commons*, by Robert Crowley).

Bishop Scory, in his letters to Edward VI, says of these men that "they are become more like the slavery of the peasantry of France than the ancient and goodly yeomanry of England."

Whatever we may think of the forcible expulsion of the monastic class of the community from their occupation and use of the lands granted to them by pious donors, or of the wanton destruction of the most beautiful abbeys and buildings in England, this policy of Henry VIII was fundamentally an assertion of the rights of the Crown to the legal ownership by the Crown of the land of England. His attitude towards the land was that of William of Normandy, from whom this attitude was derived. The Royal Prerogative was exercised by Henry VIII in the most drastic fashion. It was exercised in

favour of the King's friends, whose descendants now claim the absolute ownership of the land inherited or purchased under these forfeitures and grants by the King. Disguised by lawyers, the absolute ownership, though denied in theory, is claimed in practice.

“ Thomas Cromwell was the evil genius who presided over the England of Henry VIII, and his genius never showed itself more forcibly than when he persuaded the King to get a parliamentary sanction to these forfeitures and re-grants ” (Green's history). “ One of the most striking features of this policy,” says Mr. Green, “ had been his revival of Parliaments which was turned into the most formidable weapon of the royal will.” The House of Commons was crowded with members nominated by the Royal Council, and the nation itself was made “ an accomplice in the work of absolution.” This implies that Henry VIII, left to his own devices, would have exercised his Royal Prerogative without going through the form of an Act of Parliament. “ It was by parliamentary statutes that the Church was destroyed,” and it was “ by Bills of Attainder promoted in Parliament that the great nobles were brought to the block.” Again we follow Mr. Green: “ Partly from necessity, partly from a desire to create a large party interested in the maintenance of their ecclesiastical policy, Cromwell and the King squandered the

vast mass of wealth which flowed into the Treasury with reckless prodigality."

"Something like a fifth of the actual land in the kingdom was in this way transferred from the holding of the Church to that of nobles and gentry. Not only were the older houses enriched, but a new aristocracy was created from among the dependents of the Court. The Russells, the Cavendishes and FitzWilliams are familiar instances of families which rose from obscurity through the enormous grants of Church lands made to Henry's courtiers. The old baronage was hardly crushed before a new aristocracy took its place."

"Those families within or without the boundary of the peerage," observes Mr. Hallam, "who are now deemed the most considerable will be found, with no great number of exceptions, to have first become conspicuous under the Tudor line of kings, and if we could trace the title of their estates to have acquired no small portion of them mediately or immediately from monastic or other ecclesiastical foundations."

It is to such an origin that Londoners of to-day may trace the creation of the enormous wealth of the families named by Mr. Green and others not named by him, derived from the ownership of large tracts of London property. Generations of Londoners have created this wealth from London land. They not only created it, but they have

paid for its maintenance and repair and the rebuilding of the houses concerned ever since.

It is said that they pay over eight millions a year in rates alone to maintain the roads, sewers, and lighting and water supply, and thereby, said Mr. W. Saunders, of the London County Council, over fourteen years ago, increase the value of the land by £16,000,000 per annum (see *Great Problem of our Great Towns*, by Fred. Verinder, pp. 2-3). Mr. Verinder also quotes Carlyle as follows : " Every public improvement crystallises into land value and is collected by the landlord in the shape of increased rent."

The price of this and other dormant information about the land is one penny for Mr. Verinder's pamphlet.

For another threepence Mr. Joseph Hyder, of " The Land Nationalisation Society," will furnish the reader with an armoury of startling facts in his pamphlet *Profiteering in Land*, illustrating with many examples from actual transactions between the landowners and the public authorities the way in which the great landlords have grown rich " beyond the dreams of avarice " by their ownership of the land necessary for public improvements and for the growth of private enterprise in our great cities.

In reading the history of the rebellions against our system of landowning in the fourteenth and



fifteenth centuries we must give due weight to the importance of these struggles of our ancestors, however futile they appear to be in their results at the time; for we are the inheritors of these results to this day, and are faced with the same problems which urgently require a modern solution, by more peaceable and more constitutional methods than these poor peasants were driven to adopt.

The landlords of London have, by covenants in the leases of the houses concerned, thrown the whole burden of the rates on the occupying tenants of London houses.

From which method of dealing with the land of our great cities we may well understand how it is that the slums of our great cities are often the origin of the great wealth of their landlords.

#### KETT'S REBELLION, 1549

With the death of Henry VIII in 1547 the poison of his ill-deeds began at once to work. Within two years of his decease there arose amongst the unhappy peasants of the land another effort to free themselves from the tyranny of the land-owners.

In 1549 the peasants in Norfolk rose in rebellion against the barriers erected by their landlords, obstructing the access to the land of those who would cultivate it and who lived on it, earning a

precarious subsistence thereby. Upwards of one-third of the land of England was at this time common pasture and waste land. Now began the systematic enclosure of the common lands and pastures, which meant, as it has always meant from that day to this, the destruction of the peasantry.

This process of enclosure continued until the reign of Anne, under numberless Enclosure Acts, of which more will be said hereafter in these pages.

Against these enclosures the peasants of 1549 rose in armed rebellion under the leadership of two brothers, Robert and William Kett, who were peaceful workers in the business of tanning at Wymondham in Norfolk. They established a camp on Mousehold Heath, outside Norwich, consisting of 20,000 men, and Robert Kett administered justice and maintained order from beneath "the Oak of Reformation." They attacked and took Norwich, and after severe fighting with the local forces of the Crown, it looked as if this rebellion was destined to win the freedom of the English people from the oppression of the landowners. But the rising was crushed only by aid of German and Italian mercenary soldiers under the leadership of the Earl of Warwick (afterwards Duke of Northumberland), who happened at this time to be within reach of Norwich on the way to fight the Scottish invaders of the Borderland.

Robert Kett was captured, and was hanged at Norwich Castle.

On the same day his brother, William Kett, was hanged in chains from the top of Wymondham church tower. Then followed the usual slaughter of the rebels.

Thus ended the attempt of the English peasantry once again to break their chains of servitude.

Our English historians almost completely ignore this outbreak. It is dismissed by Mr. Green in a few lines, without mention of any of the names or circumstances of the case.

For that reason it is but fair to the memory of the thousands of peasants who perished in this effort towards freedom to set out at full length their own statement of their own case, in a Proclamation issued by the leaders of the movement either from the oak tree on Mousehold Heath or from Norwich when in their possession.

This Proclamation reveals grounds for their complaints, which are generally quite unknown to the British public of to-day, but which will awaken in their minds much sympathy and some indignation against the abuses of our land system, which created these discontents and are still creating them to this day, by reason of the defeat of these brave peasants of old. This is one of the great tragedies of English history, the effects of which have not yet passed away. In the twentieth

century other great industries have eclipsed the importance of agriculture in our minds, for agriculture has been abandoned by all who are not content to live in the dullness of villages or in the cottages of the landed proprietors, at a wage which until recently was scarcely sufficient to keep body and soul together, except by the bounty and goodwill of those who owned both the homes and the lives of the modern peasantry.

Here is the text of the Rebels' Complaint of 1549, to whom agriculture was the only industry available :—

#### THE REBELS' COMPLAINT (WYMONDHAM), 1549

“ The pride of great men is now intolerable, but our condition miserable.

“ These abound in delights; and compassed with the fullness of all things, and consumed with vain pleasures; thirst only after gain, inflamed with the burning delights of their desires.

“ But ourselves almost killed with labour and watching, do nothing all our life long but sweat, mourn, hunger and thirst. Which things, though they seem miserable and base (as they indeed are most miserable) yet might be borne howsoever, if they which are drowned in the boiling seas of evil delights did not pursue the calamities and miseries of other men with too much insolent hatred. But

now both we and our miserable condition is a laughing stock to these most proud and insolent men—who are consumed with ease and idleness. Which thing (as it may) grieveth us so sore and inflicteth such a stain of evil report, so that nothing is more grievous for us to remember, nor more unjust to suffer.

*Land Monopoly and Slavery*

“The present condition of possessing land seemeth miserable and slavish, holding it all at the pleasure of great men; not freely, but by prescription, and, as it were, at the will and pleasure of the lord. For as soon as any man offend any of these gorgeous gentlemen, he is put out, deprived, and thrust from all his goods. How long shall we suffer so great oppression to go unrevenged?

*The Common Lands Stolen*

“The common pasture left by our predecessors for our relief and our children are taken away.

“The lands which, in the memory of our fathers, were common, those are ditched and hedged in and made several, the pastures are enclosed, and we shut out. Whatsoever fowls of the air or fishes of the water and increase of the earth—all these do they devour, consume and swallow up; yea, Nature doth not suffice to satisfy their lusts,

but they seek out new devices, and, as it were, form pleasures to embalm and perfume themselves, to abound in pleasant smell, to pour in sweet things to sweet things. Finally, they seek from all places all things for their desire and the provocation of lust, while we, in the meantime, eat herbs and roots, and languish with continued labour, and yet are envied that we live, breathe, and enjoy common air.

*To Arms for the Common Right*

“ Shall they, as they have brought hedges about pastures, enclose with their intolerable lusts also all the commodities and pleasures of this life, which Nature, the parent of us all, would have common, and bringeth forth every day for us, as well as for them ?

“ We can no longer bear so much, so great and so cruel injury ; neither can we, with quiet minds, behold so great covetousness, excess, and pride of nobility. We will rather take arms and mix Heaven and earth together, than endure so great cruelty.

“ Nature hath provided for us, as well as for them, hath given us body and soul and hath not envied us other things. While we have the same form, and the same condition of birth together with them, why should they have a life so unlike unto ours, and differ so far from us in calling ?

*Direct Action for Liberty*

“ We see that things have now come to extremities, and we will prove the extremity. We will rend down the hedges, fill up the ditches, and make a way for every man into the common pastures. Finally, we will lay all even with the ground, which they, no less wickedly than cruelly and covetously, have enclosed. Neither will we suffer ourselves any more to be oppressed with such burdens against our wills, nor so great shame, since living out our days under such inconveniences we should leave the Commonwealth unto our posterity—mourning and miserable, and much worse than we received it of our fathers.

“ Wherefore we will try all means; neither will we ever rest until we have brought things to our liking.

“ We desire liberty, and an indifferent (or equal) use of all things. This will we have. Otherwise these tumults and our lives shall only be ended together.”

The massacre of brave peasants was never a settlement of a great national wrong. The nemesis of the history of the land is even now disturbing the peace of England. This nemesis will be satisfied with nothing less than the restoration of the land.

But the oppression was not ended by these rebellions, nor yet by their suppression.

England remained "a servile State" until quite modern times by reason of the creation (under such circumstances as we have recalled) of the dominating class of landowners whose personal riches grew out of the toil, the risks, and the lives of the industrial classes.

As the owners of the source of all wealth (the land), the landowners grew rich as the population increased in numbers. With increase of numbers arose a deadly competition for the means of living out of the development and use of the land. From such conditions grew up the necessities of employment for landless men at "wages of starvation" and the accumulations of capital which the modern working man has been taught to regard, not as the hand which fed him, but the hand which has enslaved him.

From this competition for work arose the degradation and misery which has overwhelmed the workers till to-day.

When modern Governments taught the landless mob of industrial workers to "read and write" by way "of educating their masters," and gave them the vote, they forgot to teach to the landed classes and capitalists the duties of repentance, and to the working classes the duties of forgiveness.

The State has yet to be born which shall teach



these great duties as a national religion. Nothing else can counter the nemesis of our past history or produce peace, happiness and prosperity out of war, misery, oppression and poverty.

### THE ENCLOSURE OF COMMONS

In this history, the next stage of oppression began in the reign of Queen Anne, following on the royal grants of lands to the favourite mistresses of Charles I and the friends of William III.

To such sources as these we owe many of our great landed nobilities : and to the Enclosure Acts from Queen Anne to the General Enclosure Act of 1845 we owe the loss to the people of upwards of seven million acres of common land ; which survived the depredations of Royal Grants from the days of the Stuarts down to the Reform Acts. These Acts gave the people a voice in the government of the country for the first time in the history of England, and so stopped further depredations on the national inheritance.

The main objects of these Enclosure Acts was, of course, to take advantage of the high price of corn under the Corn Laws, and so to increase the rentals of the land for the land-owners : but there was another motive expressed in some of the reports to the Board of Agriculture.

For instance, Mr. Bishton, who wrote the report on Shropshire in 1794, says :

“ The use of common land by labourers operates on the mind as a sort of independence ” !

When the commons are not enclosed “ the labourers will work every day in the year, and their children will be put out to labour early,” and “ that subordination of the lower ranks of society, which in the present times is so much wanted, would be thereby considerably secured ” !!

### THE LAST PROTEST

The last protest made by the agricultural labourers against their fate, occurred in 1830, when riots swept through the southern counties and ricks were set ablaze, owing to the introduction of threshing machines, which seemed to threaten the half-starved agricultural labourers with absolute unemployment or starvation wages in a worse degree than ever.

At Winchester 300 Hampshire labourers were tried, of whom 67 were acquitted and 95 transported for life to Botany Bay; the rest were imprisoned or executed.

*The Times* correspondent at Winchester described the scene of distress as most terrible. “ There is scarcely a hamlet in the county into which anguish and tribulation have not entered.”

Similar scenes of grief and suffering were exhibited at Salisbury where the sentences of transportation to Botany Bay on these poor, deluded, landless peasants were met by dreadful shrieks of lamentations from their mothers, wives and sisters in court. Some were executed, and others passed to an even worse fate. They were never seen again in England. "Later there sailed three ships to Botany Bay containing 457 English labourers—the last of those, who, through centuries, had risen against the fate of dispossession" of their native land.

It is the strange irony of this fate, that to-day the landed classes are selling out their ancient holdings of England's land in hot haste and at inflated prices, and some of them are said to be following, as far as South Africa, the course of the three ships that carried the last living cargo of agricultural labourers to penal servitude in the cause of the liberties of England.

This generation may have forgotten the history of English land, but the nemesis of history forgets nothing, and can only be appeased by mutual repentance and forgiveness, which in its turn can only be created by the sentiment of the unity of all classes in the common ownership of the land of their country.

Till this unity is achieved England will be in danger of being torn to pieces by the warfare of opposing interests amongst her population.

The history of her land has to be undone and reconstituted on better and juster principles.

And now—since the Great War—we see a panic among the land-owners to clear out of land-owning as fast as possible. The situation for them is becoming dangerous. Their lawyers are busy at work to sell, to their tenants or others, their clients' claims of ownership at the fullest market value.

There never were such prosperous times for the legal profession nor for the land agents and auctioneers. There is a growing suspicion amongst them that there is a policy of confiscation of the land arising in the minds of the people of England who have lost their natural rights to the use and benefit of their native soil.

The threat of confiscation is to be met by a polite reference to the modern tenant or purchaser who has paid down solid cash to the previous owner who has sold his landed estates to the new landowner.

Truly the land of England is rapidly changing hands, leaving the ancient land-owner in possession of the cash, and the unhappy purchasers in the forefront of the battle for the land.

This is a situation which can only be met either by full compensation to the purchasers, which means the recognition by the nation of the perversion of our land laws by past generations of andlords in parliaments from which all who owned

no land were excluded by Acts of the same parliaments, or it must be met by a direct attack on the lawful title to the lands so sold. This last involves a revolutionary judgment by the Supreme Court of the realm—the tribunal of the House of Lords. It means an admission by the most eminent lawyers that the House of Landlords, to which they belong, has been untrue to the constitution of the realm for centuries past. It means that they must admit that Blackstone (and all his disciples who believe and repeat him) was right, and that our whole land system is indefensible in law.

Who can expect this from a house of landlords and lawyers?

Ancient customs and usage—altered or ignored by Acts of Parliament recognising the abolition of the principles of trust laid down by our feudal system, fortified by countless legal decisions in recent times—will be too much for any such tribunal.

The law of trust imposed on the ownership of land and recognised by the greatest authorities, has been smothered up by the dust of ages of destruction. The liberties and rights of the people of England have had no advocates and no representatives in our parliaments until quite recent times.

The trusts of the feudal system have been extinguished, though the law still tells us that

“covenants running with the land,” such as are involved in the feudal system, are in the nature of trusts which cannot be rightly extinguished even by lapse of time. Moreover, the precise trusts of the feudal system are obsolete: and no one could wish to see them revived. Some of them still survive in a harmless form, such as counting the nails in a horse-shoe, or the best beast of a herd named as a heriot, but no one wants to see “*le droit de mariage*,” or such like ancient customs revived in modern times.

The commons are gone, and the copyholds have almost been entirely converted into freeholds. Freehold tenure itself implies a freedom from all these antiquated duties, taxes and obligations. A new tenure has grown up under the industrious cultivation of lawyers in the interests of their clients, and it is futile for Blackstone and his successors to go on teaching us that the Crown is still the only absolute owner of the land of England. All this is now considered by modern lawyers as nothing more than an obsolete theory of law—of no practical meaning at all. The English Land Laws disclaim absolute ownership in theory: but admit it in practice.

Such is the legal position of our land laws to-day. Yet—now and then—the Crown has ventured to exercise its Royal Prerogative within modern times.

Even Mr. Gladstone exercised it under Queen

Victoria in abolishing the system of "purchase" of commissions in the Army. Theoretically the Crown is still entitled by the British Constitution to declare the forfeiture of possession to the Crown of every acre of land in England. The Crown is theoretically entitled to resume possession of the land of England, and to re-grant it out on such terms as the Crown may consider just and right on the advice of the responsible Ministers of the day.

But the days of Royal forfeiture and Royal grants to Royal favourites are gone, except so far as they have been revived by the Corn Production Act of 1916 under the stress of the threatened starvation of the country by the German submarines. This Act, passed by a house of landlords, was, as usual, used by them more for the benefit of their class than for the freedom of the country from their private claims to own the land.<sup>1</sup>

It seems, therefore, that the land of England is so hopelessly entangled in the meshes of our modern laws, that nothing short of a revolution after the manner of the Bolshevics of Russia, could ever clear away the difficulties of regaining possession for the nation of the freehold land of England.

Further, our land is so enmeshed in our system of leaseholds, that no nation would be so foolish as to imitate the Bolshevics, because they would

<sup>1</sup> This Act introduced the principle of forfeiture by compulsory sale.

be thereby cutting their own throats as represented by their own leasehold interests.

As men must live somewhere—even in England—so our leasehold system has provided them with houses and homes to live in, offices in which to do their business, factories in which to carry on their industries, and lodgings where they can find shelter if they cannot afford a house. To upset our leasehold system is to upset the whole basis of our lives and industry.

Meanwhile the profit derived from the human necessity of this leasehold system is pouring into the pockets of the landlords. The rentals of houses, of land, of factories, and the prices of all sorts of necessary elements of existence, including food and furniture, are going up by leaps and bounds. Life, except to the profiteers, is becoming more and more impossible for those who are not profiteers—nor landlords.

“Compensation” to the modern land-owners at the inflated prices at which they have bought their land since the war, is financially impossible now. The depreciation of the currency has alone made it impossible, quite apart from all profiteering. The day for compensation on the old lines has passed away. Yet, for a nation threatened with national bankruptcy as England is at this moment, the reclamation of the land of England from the grasp of the private owners was never so urgent



a necessity as it is to-day. There are two great national assets, the land and the people who inhabit it. Of these the land would have no value at all without the people. It would become a land of solitude and desolation like the great desert of Sahara. Instead of being a desert, England is, thanks to the industry and toils of this nation, a land flowing with "milk and honey," but at prices which take the milk and honey beyond the reach of the poor and needy.

The inflated cost of land and of labour all make for the creation of increased wealth for the private land-owners; and thus we are brought face to face with the great problem of to-day—the Land Question. The great problem is: how to restore to the population who have created the value of the land and all its wealth, their ancient right to the wealth so created by the aid and from the resources of their common Mother—the Earth.

Thus we approach the practical consideration of the greatest problem of to-day—The Land Question.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE GREATEST PROBLEM OF TO-DAY—THE LAND QUESTION

THE preceding chapters will have stripped this problem of some of its surroundings of mystery, ignorance and prejudice. It emerges in its naked shape as a question of national justice as against private vested interests, involving wrongs done to the nation under the legal sanction of centuries of class legislation. It is a wrong not only in the past, but in the present and in the future.

The process is in active operation now, and unless stopped it will increase in intensity with the rapid growth of the population in the future.

The problem is fundamentally a question of the future. The past is beyond remedy. The future only is under our control. But as the lives or health of millions of our soldiers in the late war have been sacrificed in the cause of England's freedom from German oppression and German brutality and injustice, so have the lives of tens of thousands of the people of England and of their peasant ancestors been sacrificed in the cause of freedom at home.

The blood shed in this great cause of the liberties and freedom of the English people, to free them from the selfish aggrandisement of the private land-owners of English soil in times past, has made their cause a sacred trust for the English people of to-day.

The problem must be solved somehow, however great its difficulties.

It is a living problem of to-day as well as of past centuries.

Let us imagine, if we can, what England might have been to-day if Blackstone's exposition of the law had been regarded, not as mere obsolete theory, but as a living trust for all time operating through past centuries up to the present. Imagine the land on which the great overgrown city of London now stands being owned by all its inhabitants for all these past centuries! Or owned by the nation itself, along with all other towns, cities and villages, and harbours, and foreshores, and forests, and water supplies. Think of a nation reaping the fruits of its own labours as a nation: together with the whole of the increase in land values, not that derived from the capital or industry of individuals which would have rewarded each individual concerned as his own private personal property, but that derived from the growth of the population, and as the result of its own increase and industry.

What would London have been now?

Its citizens would have been free from all rates and possibly from most of our taxes. Our streets would be grand, clean and beautiful—laid out by public money—intolerant of the slums of dirt and unloveliness which now degrade all our cities and the bulk of our population. Poverty and ignorance would have been unknown and untolerated. Education, Science, Art, Literature, and Music would have reached such a level as is beyond our powers of imagination. The wealth which has been swept away into the hands of the land-owners as their tribute levied on our national work, would have beautified our cities and enlightened our minds instead of corrupting our ideals by the spectacle of private aggrandisement.

Our civilisation would have reached a higher stage than anything now known to the human race, except perhaps in some few corners of the earth, such as Peru and Mexico, and the West India Islands, before their civilisation was ruined and destroyed by the Spaniards under the guise of a Christianity which was even more corrupt than it is now in our own land of England.

The world would have then been saved from the spectacle of an organised system of hypocrisy, such as has disgraced the name of Christianity ever since the days when Constantine took it up and made it a State religion for the purpose of deluding its

followers into submission to the Christian Church as part of the system of Government.

It has been the unhappy fate of Christianity under such malign influences, to tolerate and to support with all its force of sacred authority, the institution of private property of individuals in the great free gift of Nature to all mankind—the land—which in its turn has made other free gifts of fresh air, sunshine and rain impossible for those who have been deprived of the use of the land, except by paying a tribute of slavery to the land-owners.

Thus has our civilisation become corrupt, tyrannical and poisonous to human nature—at its very source. Thus has all Europe been deluged with war and violence and bloodshed for ages past. Christianity has thus become a reproach to itself by its history: for its history records cruelties and persecutions unsurpassed even by the cruelties of our land system. The savage nature of humanity in its origin from animal life has been thus promoted and exacerbated. The deadly cult of self-interest and self-aggrandisement has clouded our imaginations from perception of the higher law of unity of interests, of our lives and labours, till at last now we have learnt to worship money, and “success” in getting it, as our only practical God. We distribute honours and titles and high positions to the successful in this ignoble game, and worship

this class of reward as the only thing worth living for.

That is the real teaching of our so-called Christian civilisation. It is not Christianity at all, but only worldly paganism dressed up as a social respectability. It is a dishonour to both our Christianity and to our civilisation. Those who feel the smallest interest in either, will not rest till they have repudiated these interpretations of civilisation and Christianity.

Thus are we brought face to face with the greatest moral and political problem of to-day. It is this: How and on what terms can the English people become the owners of their own country?

## CHAPTER VIII

### A SUGGESTION TOWARDS THE SOLUTION OF THIS GREAT PROBLEM

OF suggestions towards this solution there are many. Of objections to every suggestion there are more than one for each suggestion. The objections are far more numerous than the suggestions. Of what use, then, to add another suggestion? Only the hope and belief in the higher nature of man can warrant such temerity. It would be futile to think of it unless behind our lives in the flesh there did not stand the occult forces of Nature. These forces are the living realities of our lives. Of the power of these forces to heal the wounds of humanity but little is known, still less believed. To occultists they are well known because occultists and others have sought them for the light and illumination of their own and other's souls. For them the unseen world around us is the only real world. For such men the physical world is but a trial of the souls of men in their short-lived physical environment, to develop and educate their free will to act and think on lines which shall qualify them for still higher evolution. This is the Christianity that

changes the heart of man. It reveals to every individual the profoundest truth of his life, that he is a spiritual being—the work of God's hand, bound by the closest ties of unity to his fellow men of all classes and to their mutual interests in their great destiny.

This is the real message of Christ's life on earth which no Churches and creeds and ecclesiastical corruptions can altogether obscure.

Nothing short of this is of much use, because this strikes at the root of all self-seeking objections to great reforms, and alone makes possible the spirit necessary for any adequate solution. On a basis of human selfishness, no solution is possible.

But there are wonderful signs of a new spirit in the world, particularly in our own England, which is leading the whole world to a higher civilisation by peaceful means. In the new spirit now spreading through the land lies our hope of seeing a great national reform of our present stage of development solving our problems by that touch of nature which makes the whole world kin.

The very first step towards this is to eradicate from our midst the system of private ownership of the land, for that lies at the root of the evils of our present selfishness. It is the selfishness of private individuals claiming the heritage of the nation in the gifts of God as their own private property.



Now there are three main suggestions for altering this system, each with its own objections. First, there is the scheme of "Land Nationalisation," accompanied by full compensation to the land-owners, and followed by the creation of a huge new department of Government to manage and control the land.

To this the objection suggested above is overwhelming. Such compensation is financially impossible at present prices. The land of England cannot be bought back on any such basis. And, if this were possible, it means the establishment of a permanent bureaucratic administration as extravagant, as dilatory and as full of red tape as any of the worst experiences of the war have created for our irritation and discomfiture. Moreover, it upsets our leasehold system securing our personal property.

Next, there is an organised society to promote the taxation of land values to which reference has already been made. The objection to this is that it does not give to the nation either the control or the ownership of the land. It is a gradual process of expropriation of the landlord's unlawful gains from the rise in the site value of his lands. This (increasing) value is called the economic rent of the land. It is the site value in rental of the naked land.

How tremendous these gains have been in times

past ! How the public necessities for railways, for docks and harbours, coal and other minerals, have been taxed and injured by the claims of private owners, and are being taxed and injured to this day, can only be adequately realised by those who have some knowledge of the facts. Some of these facts are given in the Appendix to this book. These facts are collected together in a literature on the subject very large but almost unknown to the public. There are some little tracts already referred to, which sum up the facts in a few pages.<sup>1</sup>

Not one man in a hundred knows why his railways do not pay; why many millions of private money have been swamped by the expenses of construction; why his coal and his iron, his clothes and his food and his house rent is becoming almost beyond the reach of a limited income altogether. It is not altogether due to the war, nor to the collapse of the national credit.

The root of the whole trouble lies in our system of private ownership of the land and its minerals and other great free gifts of Nature from her great workshop. Mere counter-taxation does not touch the vital point in the private appropriation of these gifts of Nature. The trouble lies deeper than

<sup>1</sup> *The Problem of Our Great Cities*, by Mr. Fred. Verinder, 1d., 376 Strand. *An Armoury of Facts*, by Mr. Joseph Hyder, 1d., 95 Victoria Street.

taxation can remedy. This scheme is found to be inadequate to its purpose by these considerations.

The third programme is drastic enough, but is worse as a remedy than the disease it seeks to cure.

This programme is that of the Bolshevists of Russia. It is expropriation, by force, of the land-owners without any compensation at all, either for their lands or for their buildings or their own outlay of capital.

Such a programme means a repetition of the horrors of civil war as illustrated by the French Revolution of 1789, and the murderous cruelties of Lenin and Trotsky in Russia to-day.

None of these methods can be contemplated as good, practical, or wise. But the infusion of the right spirit into the first two of these proposals will create modifications and adjustments which will remove all danger of the last of these same propositions.

There must be compensation, but there must also be taxation, and the compensation must be calculated not on the inflated prices of the war nor even on the pre-war valuations, but on the just valuation of the land after it has been taxed with its due share of the repayment of the national debt incurred in protecting the land from merciless expropriation by the Germans who attacked this island.

This attack was frustrated not by money alone,

but by the death or wounds and sufferings of some three millions of killed and wounded men. The survivors and the widows and children of such men as have fallen have a first charge on the land for increased pensions and for work. Hitherto, the land has been carefully protected from taxation by the landlords in Parliament. Formerly, the land bore the burden of all the taxation necessary to carry on this realm of England.

The King was the recognised owner of the land, and on him fell the burden of the duty of protecting it with the aid of his sub-feudatories. As commerce and new industries grew up, the landlord parliaments of the day took care to free their land from almost all charges and all taxation; and they threw their burdens on the industries of the nation, which they also took good care to charge with the burden of supporting the owners of the land, their mansions and their luxuries and pleasures by the rentals levied on the peasants who cultivated it, or on the leaseholders who carried on the industries of the nation.

This system, as we have seen, is the origin of the poverty of the masses, of the slums and hovels in which they dwell, and finally of their present revolutionary attitude towards our established institutions.

To this day the landlords are permitted by law to take full advantage of the privileges of low

valuations of all agricultural or waste land for rating purposes, but to demand the fullest valuation of the same land when required by public bodies for public purposes on the basis of its real public value.

Under such a state of the law in their favour, as made or influenced by the great House of Lords, many a desolate moor used only for sporting purposes and free from all taxation and rates, except to a merely nominal amount, has been valued at many thousands of pounds when the necessities of a water supply to some big town has compelled the corporation of such town to use this desolate land with its lakes and streams as a water supply for the town concerned. The land is sold on a basis totally regardless of its assessment for rating purposes. There are many instances of this given in the pamphlets before referred to, and in the Appendix to this book.

These and hundreds of other instances of what some call "the greed, rapacity and extortion" of the landlords, may be taken as illustrations of what may more properly be called the results of the corruption of our national ideals arising from the system of private ownership of the land. The appendix gives a large number of examples of profiteering in lands.

All these things are in flat contradiction to the spirit of unity which should pervade a nation.

It has been well said that the higher self is not entombed in the flesh and a man's individuality can only do justice to itself when its lower nature expressed by a man's personality in the flesh has been merged in his higher self. Then the interests of the individual become elevated and refined by the subjection of his private personal interests to the higher spirit within him.

If this involves self-sacrifice or injury to his private vested interests, the real man himself is raised to a level of attainment which provides him with a happiness not to be attained by any amount of vested interests. In similar manner the vested interests of labour in the right to strike and of capital to sacrifice labour to profits, can both be reduced to unity and community of interests by the realisation of the fact that "no man liveth unto himself," and that no man "can live by bread alone."

There are elements in all men of all classes which render the consideration of their duties to the higher self within every one of them, much more important to their "well-being" and welfare than the accumulation of "wealth" for themselves. These elements of man's nature are the work of his Maker and cannot be ignored by any man who seeks his own welfare and happiness on intelligent lines of thought. On these lines the solution of the great land problem can become both practicable as well as fair, righteous and just. The spirit of co-

operative unity will dissolve the difficulties created by the selfishness of our lower natures. With this difficulty removed by such a spirit, the elevation of our whole life, by the same spirit, should produce a new race of men in England whose influence would civilise the whole world in due course of time. This is the only sort of war which will end war, and the only peace which will create peace.

Towards this ideal the world is now making a great effort to advance. The progress of this movement can be materially helped by our own thoughts and wishes about it.

#### SOME DETAILS OF THIS SUGGESTION

The method suggested here for dealing with the land is no dream of a communistic state. It is a practical suggestion for vesting the ownership of the land of England in the nation, leaving private personal interests in the work of a man's hands or brains untouched, except by the same spirit of unity. It can be easily carried out by the issue of national land bonds, producing an income equal to the present net income from the land to its owners, after deducting war taxation and all the present cost of management to the present owners.

*Note.*—This would make the net rent roll the basis of compensation, not the fancy capital valuation by partisan valuers of private interests in the land.

The management of districts (urban and rural) could be delegated to local councils representing the interests of the locality. Each town or village would be empowered to collect the rent of its district within a defined zone around it, and to purchase the local interest (in the increase of rental) by repaying to the central government the income payable to the owners of the bonds, thus relieving the central government of the interest on the national land bonds in respect of each such local community and securing for the local town or village the increase of rental due to the growth and enterprise of the local community.

So that, in course of time, as the community grew and the land increased in value by reason of local enterprise and improvements, by new railways or canals or roads or other amenities of civilisation which might make life in the district concerned more attractive for a growing population, the community concerned would be creating an income from their lands which would lessen and decrease the local rates until, as in Germany, some of the towns or villages concerned might become self-supporting, and free from all local rates whatever.

In Germany there are many instances of towns and villages (owning the local land) which are able not only to abolish all rates, but to divide a surplus sum amongst their inhabitants as a sort of dividend



arising from their own co-operative work. Instances of these will be found in the Appendix to this book.

*Note.*—See pamphlet *German Examples of Public Land-ownership*, published by the Land Nationalisation Society.

Meanwhile, the central government would retain the control of the land through the local land councils on which the interests of the central government would be represented by a government official as in the administration of our Indian railways.

In this way the whole of the land of England could be managed locally without expense or cost to the central government, to the advantage of the locality in each case.

This is not communism, nor socialism, as generally understood, but a practical scheme of co-operative organisation by the people and for the people who inhabit this country.

All leaseholds would remain intact, and so the interest of men in their own homes and warehouses and offices and factories would remain undisturbed till the expiration of their leases, when the local authorities under the control of the central government would renew the leases on such terms as seemed fit and suitable to the case. This is work for the army of bailiffs, factors, valuers and agents, and solicitors, who now carry on their business of promoting the interests of their private clients in

such transactions. The State would enlist and organise their services on behalf of the nation at less cost than the landlords have now to pay.

In the case of ground rents, these, too, would remain undisturbed, but the reversion to the freeholds would fall in to the benefit not of private individuals as at present on such inequitable terms as are so well known in London, but to the benefit of the nation or of the community which has taken over the management of the land concerned. Perhaps leases for 999 years would be reckoned as freeholds and treated accordingly.

In this way it is suggested that the land of England might be redeemed from private ownership with the least disturbance to vested interests, because there would be no necessity to disturb any existing land occupier of residential estate, so long as he paid his rents to the Crown and cultivated his lands properly.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime he would have the income from his land bonds to support his expenses of living on his former estates. He would be a tenant of the Crown on very similar conditions to those contained in the Corn Production Act, but on a different footing. He would be responsible for the use made of the land, but he would not be entitled to put into his own pocket the increased value arising from other men's

<sup>1</sup> The Corn Production Act has already sanctioned this principle.

labours and expenditure : whether by public, or private enterprise.

His own outlay of capital on the land would be secured to him by his tenant right, and if his land or any portion of it were required by the local authorities for public purposes, or for settlements of our soldiers and sailors, he would have nothing to sell except his tenant right, and they would have nothing else to purchase from him.

In both cases the tenants of the Crown and their sub-tenants would be liable, subject to existing leases, to pay an increased rent according to the usual quinquennial valuation of their holdings for rating purposes. In this way, the industry of the nation would automatically increase the public revenue for public purposes, until at last the present inequitable method of fining a man for his own improvements would be abolished by the increase of the national or local revenue in relief of national or local taxation.

The greater the magnitude of the sum required to buy out the landlords on this basis, the greater the benefit to the nation, for the larger would become the national revenue.

#### THE PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF MINERALS

Our land system gives the ownership of the coal and other minerals to the owners of the land. It

also professes to give the ownership of the air above the land to the owner of the land concerned. In recent times this claim has been ignored, for our air-planes are free from all royalties on the use of the air. The oil-fields of England, too, have not yet succumbed to the claims of private ownership by the land-owners concerned.

The claim to the minerals is not recognised by the land system of France and Germany, for the minerals and the right to search for them is vested in the government of these and other countries.

In England the ownership of the minerals has led to the greatest abuses existing in our land system.

The facts about the coal are concisely given in a little pamphlet, entitled *The State Ownership of Minerals*, by Joseph Hyder, published by the Land Nationalisation Society.

Some short examples of some of these facts are given in the Appendix to this book, showing how the export trade of this country has been hindered and hampered by the cost of the royalties by which many of our richest landowners have added to their large incomes, and for their own private benefit have injuriously taxed the resources of the nation in its world competition in the iron and steel trades.

The coal-miners are at this moment in revolt against these royalties, and once more threaten to paralyse the whole industry of the country by

refusing to get the coal until the coal and the coal industry is nationalised and made a national enterprise freed from the claims of the owners of the coal or of the land concerned.

This movement will probably force the Government to face the whole problem of the land and all its vested interests.

The same principle of abolishing private taxation on the labour and capital of the country will also apply to the mineral question, and the same method of solution will be applicable to the minerals as well as to the land. The land will include the minerals of all kinds, and the private taxation by private owners will be met by the public taxation of private owners of both land and minerals in order to bring their claims within reach of the financial necessities of the nation.

When by this means the nation has justly levied its claim on private owners of both land and minerals, the nation will be in a better position to abolish private ownership of both by a system of reasonable and just compensation for their vested interests in the manner already indicated. Meanwhile it should be noted that there is "all the difference in the world" between the payment of a tax for the benefit of private owners of public property, and paying the same tax for the benefit of the nation which is in urgent need of every available source of taxation.

At present, with a national debt of over 7000 millions and a burden of taxation on the nation which has already become intolerable for its poorer classes, the greatest asset of the nation—the land—is in the hands of private owners for their own private benefit.

When this national asset is restored to the nation—then the natural increase of the rental of the land will become the natural source of the relief to the present oppressive burden on the industries of the nation. The nation will be creating its own national revenue from its own property, by its own industry. This will be found to be Nature's own remedy for the present horrors of unemployment, which lie at the bottom of our industrial troubles.

This is but the bare outline of a suggestion for the solution of the Land Question on fair and equitable terms for both parties concerned—the nation and the land-owners. It is applicable mainly to rural land, but the same principle applies to urban land-owners. These are mostly concerned with the system of freehold ground rents under which our great cities have been built up and large vested interests have been created thereby in the reversionary interests on expiration of the building leases.

As regards these interests now in the hands of investors at various prices returning often less than four per cent. on their investment, these reversionary

interests would be purchased as the leases fell in on the same basis, by the issue of land bonds producing the same net income after deduction of the same war taxation and expenses of collection and management; but for ever ending at once the present method of mulcting the community by the onerous demands of the landlord for renewals of the lease such as those described in the Appendix to this book. The valuation of these reversions would have to take into account the loss of these exactions in the future.

*Note.*—Since writing the above, the Land Nationalisation Society has issued two small pamphlets working out the whole problem in the form of a draft Bill for the consideration of the Legislature. The two pamphlets are annexed hereto, and will be found under the headings of No. 10 and No. 11 in the Appendix.

## SUMMARY

To summarise the thoughts expressed in this book about the Land Question—these thoughts may be put into a few words as follows :

Both religion and philosophy teach mankind that their unity of life and interests is the fundamental principle of their lives. Our present civilisation is founded on a false basis, for it contradicts this unity. It produces separation into classes of rich and poor : the industrious and the idle, the strong and the weak, the ignorant and the educated—the great and the small.

The great gifts of Nature have been used to create these classes of men, with no sense of responsibility for one another; and so life has become a pandemonium of suffering and discontent.

This is our inheritance from the conquest of England in 1066, which began the history of England by a ruthless plunder of the inhabitants of the country and the subjection of the helpless peasants into slavery.

The institution of private property in land has been the foundation of our present civilisation.

This created a special class of men, the plunderers of Nature who have ruled the country till



the twentieth century, sweeping away in their own selfish interests every provision of the Conqueror for the peasants of the land.

This outrage on Nature is now reaping its own consequences. It is the nemesis of our history. Nature itself is in revolt against it, and when Nature revolts it is not pacified by talk about vested interests based on the outrages on Nature.

This outrage is not confined to the appropriation of the land by private individuals nor to our system of private property in land.

It extends to the use made of education, cultivation of mind, and all the best refinements of our civilisation.

Nature declares all these things, including the land and all personal property possessed by the successful in life (as such success is now understood), to be trusts for all, not to be met by charities for the unsuccessful, but by a Spirit of Unity inherent in the nature and constitution of "Man."

This Spirit of Unity is the lesson given to us by our social troubles as well as by the Great War. We are all members one of another and none can suffer without all suffering with them.

Private property in land is the foundation of the spirit of our present civilisation. It is the source of its corruption.

Till that is abolished on equitable and fair terms, and till justice is done to the workers who

have by aid of the power of capital created all our present wealth from the land, there can be no peace or unity of feeling.

Capital itself is charged with the same trusts for all.

All capital is a creation from the raw materials of the land, being wealth reserved for reproduction with the aid of labour and brains.

Nature is the fair goddess from whom all such gifts of brains and talents are derived: as well as the source of all the raw materials of wealth and of well-being.

These gifts of Nature are all trusts for humanity, but they have been used mainly for personal self-aggrandisement.

Until these trusts are recognised and regulated by a new spirit of a new civilisation, the wealth which all men seek so eagerly and use so immorally will never produce the well-being either of themselves or of the helpless victims of our present corrupted civilisation.

But the well-being of all men is the bright promise of Nature to all who learn to value that inestimable gift of happiness and content which all men really need far more than anything that wealth can give them. It is the cry of Nature within every man.

The cry of Nature cannot be ignored with impunity. *It is the Voice* speaking to the workers,

the idlers : the rich and the poor : the strong, the weak, the high and the low : the sick and the healthy. *It is the Voice* of the Great Architect of the Universe, Who created the world, its inhabitants and the Nature of all things. It also gave to man the power of his own will to control in great measure his own destiny and development. The power given to man to choose between resistance to, or surrender of, this will to the guidance of the light within his own reach is the foundation of man's responsibility for the teaching and results of his own civilisation.

On these grounds, and not from the desire to plunder anybody in revenge for past history, the restoration of the ownership of the land is advocated as an urgent necessity of the time.

Subject to war taxation on the capital involved, the net income of the owner's possessions after such taxation can be secured to them by national land bonds, redeemable by a sinking fund over a term of years.

Even our peculiar system of coal-owning must be dealt with on such lines : and where cases of hardship or injustice arise to those who have no other income or resources adequate to meet the reasonable necessities of their lives, special provisions should be made to give them a reasonable livelihood, especially in the case of helpless women and children.

The same spirit of fairness should be extended to the poor as well as to the rich, and henceforth the Nation should purge its civilisation of the horrors of poverty, distress, ignorance and selfishness which make the days of peace more horrible and far less glorious than the self-sacrifices of war.

When all suffer together the burden of suffering is lightened for all.

When all rejoice together, the rejoicing is doubly happy : and when the workers of society by hand or brain realise that their work is done for a nation which will protect them as children of the State from all that injures their well-being (even if it be by the stern discipline of self-control under compulsion), then they will require no trades unions to paralyse the industry of the State by strikes, but they will increase production to the utmost limits of their powers, knowing that thereby they are doing their duty to their comrades in doing their duty to the State.

The sentiment of unity of interests has yet to be born amongst us. No State communism can force it on reluctant minds.

It must grow out of men's own souls and it will find its own natural expression.

It can only come when our civilisation teaches it. Our civilisation can only teach it, when it creates this sentiment of unity by unifying men's

interests in the great source of all wealth and well-being, the land of our native country.

The key which unlocks the sacred chamber of the human heart, is the realisation of the Higher Self within every man. Man then gets into touch with the realities of his life. He sees through the delusions of money and the physical luxuries which at present form his ideal of success in life.

The recognition of these same potentialities in his neighbour is the secret of a higher civilisation. It is the secret of the unity of a nation—and ultimately of all nations. It can only begin by the recognition of Nature's great gifts to humanity as a sacred trust for all men.

It will be a grand day for England and for the whole world when England can answer the message of Pythagoras to humanity, "Know Thyself," by adapting her civilisation to the spirit of the teaching of the Founder of Christianity.

*Then*—both our civilisation and our Christianity will be worthy of the support of every man.

#### SOME OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

If it be objected that private ownership in land has become so deeply rooted in our civilisation that we cannot now tear it out without tearing with it the whole roots of our ancient constitution, the answer is, that this is precisely what is now necessary for the salvation of our country.

Again, if it be objected that agricultural land is not a source of profit now to the land-owners and it can best be cultivated and developed by private interests in it; or if it is objected that the State by nationalising the land would thereby only create another effete and corrupt beaurocracy to administer this great national property: the answer is, that the delegation of this control and management to the local government of each locality would convert the present apathy in the people to their own local government into a vital and a living interest in their local affairs.

They would see the vital importance to their own interests in watching closely the management of the land by their own local government.

It would be realised as a decentralisation of their national government into their own control, thereby relieving the central government, where their influence is now almost *nil*, from some of its heaviest burdens, and putting into their own hands the power by the exercise of their own business habits of relieving themselves from some of their heaviest and most unnecessary taxation by local rates.

As to the profits of land-owning, the increase of population carries with it its own profit for a community which owns its own land.

This in its turn would tend still further to increase the population till at last every possible acre of agricultural land within the area of each

community would be cultivated under the eyes of its owners to the utmost of its capabilities, and every acre of building land would be developed for building purposes by the skill of the best local builders, which is now used for the benefit of the private land-owner.

The men who have made the fortunes of the owners of building estates would more easily make the fortunes of their own local community; and would have a direct personal interest in achieving the best results.

As regards the cost of acquiring the land under any such scheme, from the present proprietors it will be observed that the nation can acquire the land on terms far less onerous than any private individual, because the national credit is behind the national purchase.

This enables payment to be made on less onerous terms and without the necessity of cash payment.

The national land bonds could be issued at less rate of interest and for less total amount than any local loans.

The interest would be more than covered by the rentals of the land and the security for this interest would be the local government of each community. The cost of management would be less in the hands of a single local board in each community than in the hands of dozens of different private land-agents, bailiffs and lawyers for each private owner.

In the deduction from the price paid by the nation for the land of the costs of management, etc., there should be a distinct saving effected by the local community.

The price paid being based on the actual net receipts by the private owners of to-day (with deduction of any land tax to be levied on the land) and capitalised at a figure sufficient to produce the net income from government land bonds for the present land-owner, would enable each local community to become possessed of an immediate source of new income as the first step towards the reduction of the local rates.

A well-managed local community would in a few years' time from the date of this transaction be able to begin to relieve the rates, until in the course of years, the income from the local land would gradually abolish the rates altogether, and possibly render the local community as rich as the present owners of the local land have become by reason of the enterprise and industry of the same people in times past.

In this scheme of land nationalisation may be found not only the abolition of oppressive local rates which at present hamper every industry in the country, but the creation of a new sense of local unity on which may be built up a new sense of national unity.

On such a foundation of a new civilisation it



may be reasonably expected that all classes of men engaged in all industries (even in the industry of our Government) may gradually learn to regard themselves as the willing workers of society in the great work of purifying their country from the selfish instincts of humanity towards their own private interests.

A new civilisation which teaches these ideals of life would have a greater influence on men's minds towards a realisation of their unity, than our present civilisation has had in teaching the exact opposite; because it would enlist the better self of every man, together with the illimitable powers of the soul of humanity in working towards the redemption of the world from its blindness to the unseen forces of Nature which ultimately control man's destiny, but which can only effectually do their work when men's minds are disposed by their education to receive "illumination" upon the meaning of their lives.

## EPILOGUE

THE epilogue to this line of thinking is naturally a dream, for are we not all "such stuff as dreams are made *on*"?<sup>1</sup> Not the baseless fabric on which some dreams are woven, but the living fabric of the spirit within us of which many of our dreams are the expression. How else can the spirit within us express itself except by dreams of thought and imagination?

The dreamer, as Edward Carpenter says, must precede the practical man. Every great movement is founded on the thoughts of men. A dreamer conceives the thoughts; the practical man carries them out, and so, like all the greatest inventions and discoveries of science, the imagination of the dreamer forms the fabric on which all our progress in civilisation is founded. Such dreams of men become the realities of life.

The tea-kettle started men dreaming of steam power and produced the steam engine. The dream of flying in the air was started by the explosive power of petrol and the dream of wings. So it is with all the greatest discoveries and

<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare wrote "made on" not "made of."

inventions of modern and ancient times. The visionary paves the way for the inventor and the reformer.

So let us follow our imagination where it leads us, and let us not treat it with disdain because it is but a dream of the future. The more earnestly we dream when wide awake, the greater the results: for our dreams become our prayers, which move heaven and earth as Empedocles taught. Let us, therefore, imagine what our civilisation will be like, when our dream of its purgation from the great source of its corruption has been duly accomplished.

#### A DREAM OF THE FUTURE

*This shall be our dream:* God's earth is reclaimed from its long centuries of private bondage. The land is free from landlords. It is the possession and the property of the nation. It is cultivated where cultivation is possible to its fullest extent in producing not only wealth but well-being by the active, healthy work and labour of body and mind under the skies of heaven, by all who wish to take up the great national industry of agriculture.

The cry of our demobilised soldiers for land to cultivate and capital to make such cultivation possible, has been answered at last. How has

this been carried out? By the co-operative work and support of the nation. There has been no purchase-money paid by the cultivators of the land beyond the value of the tenant right, of the previous occupier representing his outlay of capital and work, for vendors and purchasers of land have gone for ever from the new political economy, and with them have gone the present main occupation and business of the lawyers and bailiffs and land-agents, so far as the private owners are concerned. But their work and their skill is employed in a better cause—the cause of the nation in the management of its greatest asset—the land, for the benefit and welfare of the people of the land who have created its value and are reaping at last the fruits of their industry.

The tenants and farmers and cultivators are all trustees for the nation, liable to be dismissed like their bailiffs and managers from their trusteeship for negligence or incompetence or misbehaviour, but secure in their position and in their homes on the land from generation to generation of those who carry out their trust to the best of their ability, and with reasonable success. These agricultural workers pay a rent for the use of the land, but subject to this—they have security of tenure, security of the markets made available by railways, canals and motor lorries, all worked like their agriculture on principles of co-operative

organisation and security for their own "tenant rights."

This is no mere dream, for the system is in active operation (or was, until the recent outbreak of civil war in Ireland) in the co-operative districts of Ireland under the guiding genius of Sir Horace Plunket.

In our dream of practical life in the future, we see the labour and capital of the tenants laid out on improvements in buildings, drainage, roads, plant and repairs secured to them by a tenant right, and repaid to them by any successor to the holding.

All "real" property has become the property of the State, but the State protects all the personal property on the land for the owner, purchaser, or creator of it. The leasehold system of England remains as intact as the personal property involved in it.

The increase in value of the holding arising from public improvements which increase the good results to the occupier is met by an increase of rent which the occupier can well afford to pay out of his increase of advantages and benefits from these public improvements—such as railways, roads, drainage, telegraphs and telephones, and public buildings.

The advent of railways or of towns growing up out of the prosperity and industry of the nation,

the benefit of which at present goes to swell the private income of private owners from bare ownership of the land, accrues for the benefit of the community which has created it.

When the agricultural holding becomes building land, by the spread of the population, there is no sale of the land to the profiteers and speculating builders, but it is leased out as at present on building leases under the control of the community concerned, whether the municipality of the town or the village parish council, in whom the benefit of the reversion and of the rental may be vested, instead of allowing the benefit of all this to fall into the hands of men who, at present, grow rich without work by the legalised appropriation of these public values by the private owners. (See Appendix for examples of this.)

The new vision of the nation is a vision of real wealth, which no money can adequately represent in private hands. It is a vision of the well-being in body, soul and mind of the human entities which comprise the nation. It means the cultivation for the people not only of the land, but of themselves. It means the elevation of the human being above his sordid gains of money into the unity of his nation. It means the cultivation of patriotism in a new sense, the sense which makes impossible the success of the few by the degradation or ruin of the many. This last is, all of it,

the result of our nightmares—the evil dreams of our lower selves in the flesh.

The fall of any man, woman, or child into helpless poverty, or want of the reasonable necessities of life, or into crime and degradation of mind, body and estate, has become in the new commonwealth a crying public evil, to remedy which and to prevent its recurrence is no mere matter of poor law and workhouses and hospitals and charities. It has now become a personal responsibility on the citizens and inhabitants of the land, and a reproach on our parliaments, legislatures and religion. Meanwhile our charities have become public institutions for the reclamation of the lives of all such. Our prisons have become reformatories on better lines than anything yet tried. They have become an expression of the national conscience towards the failures in life with which they are filled. There is given a new hope for all such victims of our present civilisation. It is the hope of their welfare and happiness by their own honest work and industry.

On looking still further around on this new civilisation we note some other remarkable changes. In the upper and wealthy classes of society, we see a great change. The old house of landlords is gone. Its place is taken by a senate chosen by the nation from its most honourable, gifted and experienced men. The titles of honour and lord-

ship are confined to those who have earned them by their great public services. The mockery of hereditary titles and hereditary honours and landed estates is gone. The titles and positions of peers of the realm are limited to the lives of those who have earned them by the choice of the nation. No estates can be entailed, but no occupier can be disturbed without good reason, and as tenants of the Crown they may retain their estates by the outlay of capital and work upon them.

There are no millionaires and no beggars. Each of these classes is considered a disgrace to the rest of the nation as well as to themselves. The successful in honest work or business may accumulate personal property sufficient to enable them to live when beyond work, in all reasonable comfort, but not to bequeath or pass on to others more than is necessary to maintain the family of each of them in a similar condition of honour and comfort, provided that all such beneficiaries shall work, so far as they are not incapacitated, for themselves and the nation in some suitable method adapted to their qualifications. Idleness has become a national crime in any and every class of life, but every encouragement is given to research work by scientists and chemists and manufacturers and philosophers and teachers. If idleness has become a crime, right-thinking has become a virtue.

The work of education has been exalted into one



of the highest and most honoured of professions. As for the unsuccessful and the poor in mind, body, or estate, the same ruling principle of work equally applies to them, according to their physical or mental capacities.

But for all classes, there is behind them the full and generous support of the nation. There is no longer the dread abyss of degradation by poverty before them. No longer can the necessities of the poor be exploited by capitalists or landlords to their own benefit or glory. The land-owner can no longer turn out a political voter or a "religious" opponent from his home on the family estates.

The day has arrived when the sentiments of Robert Burns have become the law of the land governing the relations between all men of all classes; till now, at last, "A man's a man for a' that."

"Then let us pray that come it may,  
As come it will for a' that,  
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,  
Shall bear the gree,<sup>1</sup> an' a' that;  
For a' that an' a' that,  
It's coming yet, for a' that,  
That man to man, the warld o'er,  
Shall brothers be for a' that."

Whatever the future may hold for all or any classes of men, when the mind of man has been trained by the education of our national lives and

<sup>1</sup> Win the victory.

sentiments to realise their real unity of interests, and their real power over nature itself, these remarkable words of Robert Burns may well be inscribed over the portico of our Houses of Parliament. But such words and sentiments must remain dead and lifeless, until by restoration of the land to its inhabitants, the great curse of our civilisation shall have ceased to make our lives a perpetual struggle with our neighbours for the means of living. In some such co-operative commonwealth as we have ventured to dream of, may be found the soil on which these sentiments of Robert Burns may grow towards a happy realisation.

Who would condescend in such a commonwealth to live by "gambling" out of his neighbours pockets instead of by the honest work of producing wealth and well-being for all?

Who would not feel himself degraded by drunkenness, or vice, or theft, or cheating, or lying to his neighbour's injury?

Who would not be ashamed of wearing or owning priceless jewellery whilst millions of men and women are living in an atmosphere of dirt, disease, degradation and vice, with hardly sufficient clothing to need a tin pin?

The new atmosphere would create a new spirit and new ways of regarding ourselves and others. The energies of life when directed to a common

end, would never more waste themselves on the quarrels and bickerings and envyings and malicious gossip which now form the chief recreation of so many classes of people, whose daily life is permeated with a sense of hostility to their rivals in wealth and position.

When the woes and unavoidable afflictions of life for some are the public concern of all the rest, the mitigation of unavoidable calamity would be the duty and the pleasure of the more fortunate.

Civilisation would have changed its hue, and a new world would emerge from the present chaos, which would make this earth the training-ground for the governance of the spirit, instead of the kingdom of the rule of the fleshly instincts of humanity.

Robert Burns had his vision of it. It is for us to realise his dream and to dream it for ourselves. From such dreams will arise the vision of "the higher self" in every dreamer, and there will emerge an enlarged vision of what a man really is and of the great work before him in his higher stages of existence, when the dissolution of the flesh shall have freed him from its domination over the spirit.

The dream of Robert Burns is but one glimpse of a seer into the realities of our lives. There are many other dreamers in every generation. Shakespeare is, perhaps, the greatest of all, and when

Shakespeare speaks of man as the fabric of a dream, he is but telling us in other words that nothing is real except our higher consciousness. Every great thinker from the Bhudda to Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato, through Jesus of Nazareth and the Neo-Platonists, down to our own modern poets Tennyson, Wordsworth and Browning, and all the philosophical schools of all time down to the present day, proclaim the same great truth.

Of matter, we know nothing except our own consciousness of it. Of spirit, the same thing is true. The real man can hardly be said to exist at all until he has become conscious of his own existence as a spirit inhabiting "a muddy vesture of decay." We are but our own consciousness; and our own consciousness is the real measure of our lives. To enlarge our consciousness is to enlarge our real selves. To enlarge ourselves is but to cultivate our own well-being. This is the real "wealth" of humanity, beside which the wealth of which political economists talk so much is but poor stuff. Yet the physical necessities of the body must be supplied whilst the spirit inhabits it. Such are the primary conditions of life in the body. Till these conditions are met, our consciousness is absorbed, and often narrowed by our physical want.

Hitherto, these physical wants have degraded humanity from its high calling. The world of

man is starved by the narrowness of its consciousness. Humanity has no reasonable chance of knowing itself until the physical wants of the body cease to make all growth of consciousness impossible for the multitude. Till then the multitude is hardly human. They are but the fleshly ghosts of men, awaiting their resurrection from those tombs of their spirit which we call their bodies.

Hence the fundamental importance to all humanity of revising our civilisation, till the free gifts of heaven to all mankind comprised in the words "the land" (which includes the earth, the water, and the air) are as sacred to all humanity as life itself.

The Land Question is, therefore, no mere political problem. It is a problem of Life and Death, by which is meant, not mere physical life only, but the life or death of the soul of humanity, which is in reality the consciousness and its capabilities of expansion, given by the same Great Hand that endowed man and all things with life, and gave us the land as the source of all wealth, and the conception of well-being as the great secret of our lives.

This enlargement of human consciousness will furnish the solution of all our political and social troubles and difficulties. It is the foundation stone of the building up of the unity of all humanity.

.Our statesmen and politicians may wrangle and strive with one another on their present lines. Parliaments may pass endless Acts directed to remove grievances from some, but often creating more grievances for others than they remove from the some, but till politicians, statesmen and parliaments recognise the truth about themselves and all their supporters and opponents, they will fail to satisfy the cravings of all for something which no parliaments and no statesmen and no wealth can satisfy. It is the craving of humanity for that well-being which lies at the root of their lives and existence, and does not end, but only really begins, when all other forms of wealth are left behind them in a physical world which has never yet satisfied these same cravings, and never can produce the happiness for which all human beings instinctively yearn.



## APPENDICES





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## APPENDICES

### No. 1

(Extract from “ *An Armoury of Facts*,” by  
Joseph Hyder)

#### RECENT EXAMPLES OF EXTORTIONATE DEMANDS FOR LAND FOR HOUSING

	£		s.	d.	
Alfreton ..	1,200	an acre, which only paid	3	4	in rates.
Bangor ..	425	“ “ “	4	3	“
Barnard Castle	600	“ “ “	7	6	“
Birkenhead .	864	“ “ “	5	6	“
Blaydon ..	605	“ “ “	2	3	“
Bolton . . .	403	“ “ “	2	2	“
Cleethorpes .	500	“ “ “	5	0	“
Derby .. .	650	“ “ “	8	3	“
Edinburgh .	13,120	“ “ “	11	7	“
Hamilton ..	500	“ “ “	4	8	“
Littlehampton	400	“ “ “	3	1	“
Maryport ..	1,200	“ “ “	2	8	“
Northampton	1,400	“ “ “	6	4	“
Richmond ..	2,000	“ “ “	11	10	“
Ynysybwl ..	1,000	“ “ “	40	0	“

Other prices per acre were: £5,800 at Belfast, £10,000 at Dublin, £3,000 at Manchester, £600 average price in forty-three schemes in Wales, and £24,250 at Ebbw Vale (Duke of Beaufort) for land rated at £56 per annum.

Cheap land is the first essential of every housing scheme, in order that every home may have its garden at the front and back, plenty of sun and

air, and opportunities for life in the open air and the growing of flowers, grass and shrubs that beautify the surroundings and make the house attractive—to say nothing of the chance of growing fruit and vegetables to increase the supply of food for the family. And building land will never be cheap so long as private profiteering in it is permitted. Every consideration therefore points to the necessity for making the community the sole owner of the land it resides on.

#### PROFITEERING IN AGRICULTURAL LAND

Space forbids more than a brief reference to the operations of landlordism in land that is used for cultivation. The exactions of landlords in Ireland were such that the State had to step in to reduce them. In Scotland the same action had to be taken to protect the crofters. In each case it was shown that there prevailed a systematic robbery of the tenants. Irish hostility to this country, both in Ireland and America, is a legacy of those evil days.

The high rents charged to small-holders and allotment-holders in England are matters of universal knowledge. The larger farmers have been more leniently treated, but in the days of the Corn Laws the landlords thrived on high rents, while farmers were driven to the bankruptcy courts, and

the common people were starving. And when foreign competition in corn developed in the 'eighties and 'nineties rents did not come down generally until thousands of farmers were ruined and scores of thousands of labourers were driven to the towns or were forced to emigrate.

Where landlords have large incomes from other sources, as from town rents or mineral royalties, it is quite true that they do not usually rack rent their agricultural tenants, and it must be remembered that in many cases large agricultural estates are not acquired or held primarily as sources of income so much as pleasure grounds. They are held because they afford opportunities for game preserving and fox-hunting, and because they confer power, prestige, political influence, and social status, and give a sense of spaciousness to the lives of their fortunate possessors. None the less, private advantage is the main purpose of their owners, although it does not solely take the form of money.

But cultivation is hindered whenever sport is aimed at, the production of food is hampered and reduced, small-holders are kept off, the farmers have no security of tenure and are kept subservient either by the fear of displeasure or the hope of favours, while the labourers are landless and helpless. In fact, not the least of the evils of landlordism is the way in which it destroys

liberty of thought and action in rural places, and impoverishes men in all the essentials of independence.

*In Conclusion*

In conclusion, it is clear that the highest possible production of wealth is unattainable under the deadening influence of private land-ownership. Millions of acres of land will have to be drained and reclaimed and millions of acres await afforestation. For every purpose the first requirement is that the land shall become national property. Under that system, and under that system only, will it be possible to give incentives to industry and security of tenure that will promote production, and, by abolishing the treatment of land as an instrument of private profiteering, will secure for the whole community the whole value of the land which is their inalienable inheritance.

No. 2

SIX POINTS OF THE PEOPLE'S LAND CHARTER

1. *All the Land under Public Ownership and Control.*—On and after a given date all private ownership of land to come to an end. The State to be supreme owner of all land, including, of course, the minerals. Local councils to administer it under a National Land Council or Ministry of Lands,

2. *Easily Accessible as a Right.*—Access to land, each according to his needs and subject only to the equal rights of others, to be the recognised birthright of every free citizen. A right that must be granted, not a favour that may be withheld. This is the very foundation of economic freedom.

3. *With Full Security of Tenure.*—State tenants to enjoy the full security of tenure which is only obtainable now by the few who can afford to buy land. This security to be guaranteed so long as the rent is paid and the land is properly used. Improvements made by tenants to be their own property. This is the true “magic of property which turns sand to gold.”

4. *At a Fair Rent.*—A fair rent, as distinct from a rack rent, to represent the true value of land according to its natural fertility or position. To be periodically revised in fairness to both the individual as tenant and the community as owner. The good tenant to pay no more than the bad tenant for the same kind of land.

5. *The Land to be put to its Best Use.*—The governing authorities to insist on this. The highest possible production to be aimed at. Waste land to be reclaimed, all suitable land to be afforested. The production of wealth in food, timber, houses, etc., to come before game preservation, fox-hunting, and the maintenance of

great parks and pleasure grounds for a privileged few.

6. *The Rental Value to be Public Revenue.*—The whole annual value of land to become ultimately available for public purposes, after provisions for the prevention of injustice to those who have invested their earnings in land with the sanction and encouragement of the State itself.

The full financial benefit of land nationalisation would not accrue at once, but from the very beginning there would be a profit to the State, with the unearned increment as it accrued and the direct and complete public ownership and control of land, which is the most essential thing.

### No. 3

#### OPINIONS OF LEADING THINKERS<sup>1</sup>

There is absolute unanimity among all legal authorities that land cannot be full private property.

SIR EDWARD COKE (*Institutes*):

All land or tenements in England, in the hands of subjects, are holden mediately or immediately of the King.

SIR WILLIAM BLACKSTONE (*Commentaries*):

Accurately and strictly speaking, there is no foundation in nature or in natural law why

<sup>1</sup> For a much fuller list see *The Case for Land Nationalisation* (J. Hyder), Chap. II.



a set of words on parchment should convey the dominion of land. "It is a received and now undeniable principle in law that all lands in England are holden mediately or immediately of the King."

MR. SERJEANT STEPHENS (*New Commentaries*):

All lands owned by subjects in England are in the nature of fees, whether derived to them by descent from their ancestors or purchased for a valuable consideration, for they cannot come to any man by either of these ways unless accompanied by those feudal incidents which attended upon the first feudatories to whom the lands were originally granted.

JOSHUA WILLIAMS (*Principles of the Law of Real Property*):

An English subject may enjoy the absolute ownership of goods, but not of land. The king is the supreme owner, or lord paramount, of every parcel of land in the realm.

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE COLERIDGE (*Laws of Property*):

All laws of property must stand upon the footing of the general advantage; a country belongs to the inhabitants.

SIR FREDERICK POLLOCK (*English Land Laws*):

No absolute ownership of land is recognised by our law books except in the Crown.

SHELDON AMOS (*The Science of Law*):

The land cannot be looked upon, even provisionally, as a true subject of permanent individual appropriation.

J. A. FROUDE (*History of England*):

Land was never private property in that personal sense of property in which we speak of a thing as our own with which we may do as we please.

#### COMMON LAND-OWNERSHIP CAME FIRST

PROF. PAUL VINOGRADOFF (*Growth of the Manor*):

There seems to be hardly anything more certain in the domain of archaic law than the theory that the soil was originally owned by groups, and not by individuals.

SIR HENRY MAINE (*Village Communities*):

The institution familiar to us, individual property in land, has arisen from the dissolution of the ancient co-ownership.

EMILE DE LAVELAYE (*Primitive Property*):

It is only after a series of progressive evolutions, and at a comparatively recent period that individual ownership, as applied to land, is constituted.

OLIVE SCHREINER (*Stray Thoughts on South Africa*):

Each Bantu tribe holds its land in common, re-appointing it as the increase or diminution

of its members require. The doctrine that land can become the private property of one is morally repugnant to the Bantu.

WALTER BAGEHOT (*Economic Studies*) :

As is now generally known, the earliest form of land-holding was not individual owning but tribal holding. This joint-stock principle is that which has been by far the commonest in the world, and that with which the world began.

WILLIAM PALEY (*Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*) :

The land was once, no doubt, common; and the question is, how any particular part of it could justly be taken out of the common, and so appropriated to the first owner as to give him a better right to it than others, and what is more, a right to exclude all others from it.

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The Indian village community, the Russian "mir," the German "mark," all alike held the land on which they lived as common property. Primitive tribes in our own time hold it in the same way. Under the clan system in Scotland the land was the property of the clan as a whole, not the property of the chief of the clan, as it is regarded now. And in all Mohammedan countries the supreme owner of the land is the State, not the individual.

## POLITICAL ECONOMISTS

ADAM SMITH (*Wealth of Nations*):

The wood of the forest, the grass of the field, and all the natural fruits of the earth, which, when land was in common, cost the labourer only the trouble of gathering them, come, even to him, to have an additional price fixed upon them, when land has become private property. He must then pay for the licence to gather them, and must give up to his landlord a portion of what his labour either collects or produces. This portion, or what comes to the same thing, the price of this portion, constitutes the rent of land.

RICARDO (*Principles of Political Economy*):

Rent is that portion of the produce of the earth which is paid to the landlord for the use of the original and indestructible powers of the soil.

JOHN STUART MILL (*Principles of Political Economy*):

The essential principle of property being to assure to persons what they have produced by their own labour and accumulated by their abstinence, this principle cannot apply to what is not the produce of labour, the raw material of the earth. No man made the land: it is the original inheritance of the whole species.

. . . The land of every country belongs to the people of that country.

PROF. J. E. CAIRNES (*Political Economy*):

Sustained by some of the greatest names—I will say by every man of the first rank in political economy—from Turgot and Adam Smith to Mill, I hold that the land of a country presents conditions which separate it economically from the great mass of the other objects of wealth.

PROF. A. MARSHALL (*Principles of Economics*):

The use of a certain area of the earth's surface is a primary condition of anything that man can do. It gives him room for his own actions, with the enjoyment of the heat and the light, the air and the rain, which Nature assigns to that area. It determines his distance from, and in a great measure his relations to, other persons. This property of "land" it is which, though as yet insufficient prominence has been given to it, is the ultimate cause of the distinction which all writers on economics are compelled to make between land and other things.

J. B. SAY (*Économique Politique*):

The earth is the only agent of Nature, or nearly so, that one set of men take to themselves to the exclusion of others; and of which

consequently they can appropriate the benefits. Happily no one has yet been able to say, "The wind and the sun are mine, and the service which they render must be paid for."

## PHILOSOPHERS

THOMAS CARLYLE (*Past and Present*) :

Properly speaking the lands belong to these two: To the Almighty God, and to all His children of men that have ever worked well on it. No generation of men can or could, with never such solemnity and effort, sell land on any other principle; it is not the property of any generation, we say, but that of all the past generations that have worked on it, and of all the future ones that shall work on it.

JOHN RUSKIN (*Time and Tide*) :

Next of wholly unjustifiable rents. These are for things which are not, and which it is criminal to consider as, personal or changeable property. Bodies of men, land, water, and air are the principal of these things. . . . Bodies of men or women, then, and much more, as I said before, their souls, must not be bought or sold. Neither must land, nor water, nor air; these being the necessary sustenance of men's bodies and souls.

LEO TOLSTOY (*The Great Iniquity*) :

The nearest and most obvious evil, private property in land. . . . The truth that land cannot be an object of property has become so elucidated by the very life of contemporary mankind that, in order to continue to retain a way of life in which private landed property is recognised, there is only one means—not to think of it, to ignore the truth, and to occupy oneself with other absorbing business. So, indeed, do men of our time.

The evil and injustice of private property in land have been pointed out a thousand years ago by the prophets and sages of old. Later progressive thinkers of Europe have been often and oftener pointing it out.

ST. GREGORY THE GREAT :

This is the way in which we must preach to the people who keep what they have got and help not others. We must give them clearly to understand that the land has been given by God to be the common property of all men.

ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE (*The Why and How of Land Nationalisation*) :

Neither pure air, nor water, neither food, clothing, nor fire, can be obtained without land. A free use of land is therefore the absolute first condition of freedom to live; and it

follows that the monopoly of land by some must be wrong, because it necessarily implies the right of some to prevent others from obtaining the necessities of life.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON (*Man, the Conservative*) :

I find this vast network, which you call property, extending over the whole planet. I cannot occupy the bleakest crag of the white hills of the Alleghany Range but some man or corporation steps up to me to show me that it is his.

Yonder sun in heaven you would pluck down and prevent shining on the universe, and make him a property and privacy if you could; and the moon and the north star you would quickly have occasion for in your closet and bed-chamber. What you do not want for use you crave for ornament, and what your convenience could spare your pride cannot.

CARDINAL MANNING :

The land question means hunger, thirst, nakedness, notice to quit, labour spent in vain, the toil of years seized upon, the breaking up of homes, the misery, sicknesses, deaths of parents, children, wives, the despair and wildness which spring up in the hearts of the poor, when legal force, like a sharp harrow, goes over the most sensitive and vital rights of mankind. All this is contained in the land question.

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## No. 4

## SOME STATISTICS ABOUT RURAL LAND

According to Prof. Middleton's report to the Reconstruction Committee appointed by Mr. Asquith—Germany with a much poorer soil than ours produces just twice as much food per hundred acres as we do.

Our land, says Mr. Christopher Turner, Sir W. Earnshaw Cooper and other educated agriculturalists, would "under a reconstructed agriculture produce £8 worth (at pre-war prices) of food per acre instead of £4 worth."

"There are 50,000,000 acres under cultivation in the United Kingdom. A yield of £8 per acre would mean an extra £200,000,000 worth of food annually from the United Kingdom—which at the present increased prices would mean more than £350,000,000 worth of food which we are importing now from overseas."

During the last sixty years, says Mr. Turner, "some million agricultural labourers have been driven from the land owing to adverse conditions. The whole range of conditions affecting the industry must be radically altered. Labourers must be paid a good wage: they must be given an opportunity for advancement, access to land, access to capital so that the labouring man of the right sort shall not be prevented, owing to lack of capital,

from taking the land and becoming an independent man. Co-operation and credit must be developed to the full. Transport must be organised and cheapened. Subsidiary industries must be developed. Comprehensive schemes for the settlement of ex-service men must be started."

"Ours is a country of great estates, and the mass of the people are without any part or lot in the land which by moral right should be the property of all."

The land of England was confiscated by the Conqueror and granted to his own supporters under circumstances of barbarity and cruelty only equalled by the process under which the land of Ireland has been confiscated and granted to the conquerors from England. Every title of every landlord is ultimately founded on acts of violence and oppression—which the law supports by the doctrine that unchallenged possession even for twelve years gives a good title to the land.

The fishermen of Cullercoats were in modern times driven from earning a scanty livelihood by collecting the limpets and sea-weed on the rocks of the foreshore at Cullercoats by the claim of the Duke of Northumberland to private ownership of the sea-weed and the rocks.

The same private owner claimed a derelict whale cast up on the shore.

The Duke of Buccleuch is the owner of nearly

half a million acres dispersed over fourteen counties. The origin of his title to many thousands of acres in Eskdale may be found in Sir Walter Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (Canto III, x to xii):

“ By the sword they won their land,  
And by the sword they hold it still.”

Deeds like these were in Herbert Spenser's mind when he penned his unanswered and unanswerable indictment of private titles to land: “ It can never be pretended that existing titles to such property are legitimate. Violence, fraud, the prerogative of force—the claims of superior cunning—these are the sources to which those titles may be traced.”

The landless tenants of Eskdale have suffered ever since by being compelled to pay the Scotts of Buccleuch for the mere permission to live on the land at all.

These and numerous other acts of oppression lie at the fountain head of all titles to the grantees of land by the King in past generations. The reader is referred to the great work by Mr. Joseph Hyder, *The Case for Land Nationalisation*, for fuller particulars and further examples.

In these brief extracts from high authorities may be found the new agricultural policy required, in a nutshell.

We may also see in them an exposure of the danger of our present land system to the safety of the British Islands in a war with a maritime power.

England needs a new landlord system in order to create a new agricultural system, out of the reach of submarine warfare.

The late war has brought about also a financial crisis in England which compels her to choose between a new landlord system or national bankruptcy.

### NO. 5

#### STATISTICS ABOUT THE NUMBER OF LAND-OWNERS IN ENGLAND

BEFORE the present scare amongst land-owners, which is causing them to sell out as rapidly as they can, there were according to the new Domesday Book of 1874, 1,173,724 owners of land in the United Kingdom—counting every man who held land in separate counties as a separate owner in each county, and not counting any land as property which was not assessed to the rates, that is all land withheld in a condition of uselessness, for a rise in price, and exempt from rates meanwhile.

Every small owner of even one-eighth of an acre was counted as of equal value in this enumeration of landlords with a great ducal owner who owned a million acres in one county: but four times the value of any large land-owner who held thousands of acres in four counties.

This method of enumeration brought up the total

landlords to a much higher figure than exists in reality.

The landlords are much fewer in number than the official figures allow.

Out of a total of 1,173,724 persons returned as land-owners 852,438 of these possess only 188,413 acres amongst them : whilst the possessions of the Duke of Sutherland alone are more than seven times as extensive as the total acreage held by the 852,438 of his fellow landlords. Each of these latter possess an average of one-fifth of an acre whilst the Duke possesses 1,358,000 acres.

In the House of Lords, 525 peers own 15,201,165 acres, excluding all their most valuable possessions in the City of London, where one acre may be worth many thousands of acres of agricultural land. It is estimated that about twelve large land-owners once owned the bulk of the freehold land on which London is built, drawing from it many millions of income yearly : increasing in value as their possessions became more and more necessary to the increasing inhabitants of London.

## No. 6

### EXAMPLES OF UNEARNED INCREMENT IN THE VALUE OF LAND

The adjective "unearned" is usually applied only to the increases in land values which are due to the

growth of population (and consequently the demand for land) and similar causes. But it is equally applicable to the whole value of land. The unearned increment is simply an addition to an already existing value which is equally unearned by those who now appropriate it.

Mr. Sydney Webb calculated some years ago that the bare land of London had increased by £6,000,000 per annum in twenty years, or at the rate of £300,000 a year.

The following examples are given of the growth of the unearned increment in various parts of London.

#### LONDON

*The City.*—The site of the Royal Exchange was sold for £3,000 in the middle of the sixteenth century. It was sold for £7,400 after the Great Fire of 1666. Its value is now estimated at £1,250,000.

The site of the Peabody Statue at the rear of the Royal Exchange cost the City Corporation £10,000.

Adjacent sites in Cornhill have been sold at the rate of £3,000,000 an acre.

A house in Lombard Street let in 1668 for £28 per annum. The same site yielded £2,600 per annum in 1877.

*Shepherdess Walk.*—Site bought for £220 in

1664. Rent, £3,500 in 1898, on 91 years' lease. Reversion to rack rent of £17,500 in 1989.

*Cheapside.*—King Street, 4,080 square feet, on the Mercers' Estate, let by auction in 1905 for 11s. per foot. Capital value, £680,774 per acre.

*Bloomsbury.*—All the Bloomsbury Estate was bought by the Earl of Southampton for £600 in 1617.

*Covent Garden and Long Acre.*—Covent Garden and Long Acre, worth £6 6s. 8d. per annum when granted by Edward VI to John Russell.

Ground rent (to Duke of Bedford) for Covent Garden Theatre, £10,000 per annum. Net revenue from Covent Garden market, £15,000 per annum.

*Dulwich College Estate.*—Bequeathed by Edward Alleyn, an actor and contemporary of Shakespeare, "for the support of twelve poor scholars." Now valuable building land.

*Hampstead.*—Land worth 1½d. an acre in 1100, now worth £5,000 an acre.

*Holborn.*—The churchwardens of St. Clement-le-Danes bought twelve houses in Holborn in the sixteenth century for £160. The annual income derived from that site is now £7,000.

*Kensington.*—Land bought by Commissioners of the 1851 Exhibition for £186,000 valued in 1889 at £1,500,000.

*Kentish Town.*—Prebendal Manor of Cantelows, from St. Giles's parish through St. Pancras and

Camden Town to Highgate, leased in 1768 to Mr. Fitzroy, brother to Duke of Grafton, the Prime Minister, for £300 per annum, now worth more than 1000 times as much.

*Lambeth.*—Site of London County Council County Hall, Pedlar's Acre, left by an old pedlar to St. Mary's, Lambeth, over 400 years ago.

The rent was 2s. 8d. per annum in 1504

„	£41	„	1690
„	£100	„	1752
„	£1,800	„	1911

Sold to the London County Council for £81,000 in 1911.

*Lincoln's Inn Fields.*—Site sold for £1,721 in 1758; it realised £13,000 in 1904.

*Oxford Street.*—Ground rent of Selfridge's Stores £10,000 per annum. Ground rent of Waring and Gillow, £25,000 (to Lord Ashton) for first ten years, £31,000 for second ten years, £37,500 for the remainder of the lease.

*Pimlico.*—Crown Farm, 430 acres, worth £21 per annum in 1603, now worth millions.

*Portman Estate.*—Off Edgware Road and Oxford Street. Bought as grazing land by Mr. Portman. Developed in the year of the French Revolution on 99-year leases. In 1888 1,700 leases fell in and Lord Portman netted £1,250,000.

*St. George's Fields.*—Hayle's Charity land sold



for £300 in 1671. Let for £33 per annum in 1784. Revenue, £6,196 per annum in 1913.

*St. James's Square.*—Forty-five acres granted by Charles II to his illegitimate son, the Duke of St. Albans. One acre of it now worth £250,000.

*Shepherd's Bush.*—Three plots bought in 1629 for Campden's Charity; then worth £23 per annum. In 1881 the annual income was £3,600; now very much more owing to the Central Tube.

*Strand—Holborn Improvement.*—A site in Wych Street (6,125 feet) bought in 1879 for £5,000. Held idle for years, rate free, "in expectation of the clearance." Price asked, £14,000. Price paid by London County Council, after arbitration, £11,084.

*St. Mary-le-Strand.*—Charity land left in 1667; then worth £7 per annum. Revenue in 1900 was £2,257 per annum.

*Trafalgar Square.*—According to prospectus of the Carlton Hotel Company, the site of the Grand Hotel cost at the rate of £4,000,000 an acre.

#### EDINBURGH

In 1760 land to the north of the old Nor' Loch (now Princes Street) feued at 10s. per annum per acre. In 1766 feued to the city by Heriot's Trustees at £7 per annum per acre.

In 1772 a Princes Street site feued for £4 13s. 4d. per annum. Same site ( $\frac{1}{4}$  acre) sold for £100,000 in 1905.

In 1804 land along Leith Walk feued at £4 per acre, now up to £480 per acre.

In 1905 land in George Street sold for £57 per square yard, or £275,880 per acre.

In 1879 the Braid Estate (600 acres) of the Cluny Trustees yielded £1,600 per annum in rent. In 1906 one-sixth of it was feued for £3,300 per annum.

Warrender Park Estate (71 acres), originally part of the Common Good of the City, first feued at £52 per annum. In 1906 gross feu duty was £10,759 per annum.

Duke of Buccleuch got £120,000 for site of the Gas Works.

Mr. Gordon Gilmour got £60 per annum per acre for nearly 30 acres, site of Fever Hospital.

#### LEEDS

In 1862 land was bought for £6 10s. a yard. In 1893 it realised £30 a yard.

In 1862 land in East Parade fetched £1 12s. per yard. In 1897 it realised £24 10s. a yard.

Land near City Square was sold in 1897 for £75 a yard.

#### LIVERPOOL

In 1635 Lord Molyneux bought the Lordship of Liverpool for £450.

The Corporation leased 1,000 acres in Lord Street area for £30 per annum.

When giving evidence in 1888 before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Town Holdings, the late Sir A. B. Forwood stated, concerning the Liverpool Corporation Estate (694 acres) "that the falling in of the leases fifty-three years later (that being the average unexpired term) would give the ratepayers of Liverpool a property, the fee simple of which was worth £12,500,000, and which would absolutely pay all the rates of the town." The present income is only about £100,000, but it ought to be much more.

Parliament Fields were assessed at £40 per annum as agricultural land. Part of them sold to the city by the Earl of Sefton for £100,000. He now draws £10,000 a year from the remainder, which was farm-land two generations ago.

Land near the Newsham Estate bought by the Corporation for 1s. 8d. per yard; now worth 10s. per yard.

#### MANCHESTER

In 1596 Sir Nicholas Mosley bought the manorial rights for £3,500. In 1845 a Mosley sold to the city what was left for £200,000.

In 1833 the Improvement Committee paid from 30s. to £4 per yard. In 1902 it paid £123 per yard in Corporation Street.

In 1849 the land bought for the Smithfield Market cost £3 to £7 a yard. Recently the Markets Committee paid up to £35 a yard for adjacent land.

In 1881 land (384 yards) in Cross Street cost £20,000. In 1900 it was sold for £40,000.

In 1630 Humphrey Booth bequeathed two meadows, worth £19 per annum, for charity. The following two cases are parts of that land. The £19 per annum has grown to £13,764 per annum.

In 1841 a corner site (Piccadilly and Port Street) was rented at £194. In 1901 the same land was rented at £4,544.

In 1841 a corner site (Oxford Street and Bridge-water Street) sold for £600. In 1901 it fetched £8,436.

In 1870 the Trafford Estates were worth £90,000. In 1896 Mr. E. T. Hooley bought them for £360,000. In 1897 he sold them to the Trafford Park Estates Company for £901,000.

In 1817 the site of the old Town Hall cost £22,000 per acre. In 1904 it was sold at the rate of £532,400 per acre, and the citizens benefited as it was public property.

## No. 7

### EXAMPLES OF REDUCTION IN RATES BY LOCAL TOWN OWNERSHIP

There are some few cases in England, even in London, where the landed possessions of the town or corporation have had the effect of reducing local taxation. The corporate body of the City

of London has been able to build more than one bridge over the Thames out of such ownership. Other towns have been similarly relieved *pro tanto* from a small amount of taxation. The endowments of Trade Guilds with local land have created the vast wealth of the City Companies.

But in Germany there are many instances of public ownership : in a less small degree, but full of significance for the future of our English land policy.

The Burgomaster of Treis, on the Moselle, writes : " The Burgomastery of Treis consists of an area of 25,000 acres. Of these more than 12,500 acres belong to the parishes. All local needs are met from the common purse. Then each burgher receives his firing on payment of half or one-third of its value, and 25 to 30 acres of cultivable land for his lifetime. On this public land the class without means finds work and support through almost the whole year. As the parish only takes from the produce of its possessions as much as it wants for its common needs, the labourer gets almost all the produce of his toil. Such are the circumstances of almost all the lower Moselle.

" Freudenstadt (Württemberg) consists of about 1,300 households, and possesses about 6,000 acres of wood and 32 acres of meadow. The revenue is thus spent : £5,300 for the local taxes, £75 for common needs, £1,650 divided among the burghers.

“Gernsheim (Hesse), a place with 110 households, owns 1,845 acres of wood, 245 acres of meadow, and 1,817 acres of cultivable land. The revenue is thus divided: £1,145 for local taxes, £2,661 for division.”

On the other side of the form of inquiry, the Burgomaster has made the following instructive note: “Beyond the above-named outlay in connection with the public land no taxes are raised here, but all—local rates, State taxes, river and weir dues—is covered by the return from the common property and common undertakings. The total amounts to from £2,350 to £2,450 a year.

“Note, in addition, that the common property of the burghers is a great boon, because it preserves individuals from absolute destitution, gives families the opportunity of finding scope for their powers of work and for finding the necessities of life, for which otherwise the means would be lacking.”

#### No. 8

#### LESSONS FROM THE COAL COMMISSION

It is a maxim in British law that “to whomsoever the soil belongs, to him belongs all that is above it and all that is beneath it,” except gold and silver. The commercial greatness of this country has been mainly founded on coal, which

is the most precious of all minerals; and every ton of coal, as well as of iron, lead, tin, copper, zinc, china clay, and so on, has paid a tax to a private landlord in the shape of rents, royalties, and wayleaves. The Sankey Commission has unanimously reported in favour of the nationalisation of coal. Even the capitalist lessees of the mines have agreed to that, although they are opposed to the State actually working the coal. This unanimity is a remarkable tribute to the obvious justice of the case for the abolition of the system of private property in coal, which has lasted for centuries.

The Chairman's chief reasons for making his recommendations on this point are as follow :

1. That coal is our principal national asset.
2. That seams of coal are now vested in the hands of nearly 4,000 owners, some of whom are a real hindrance to their development.
3. Where there are many small owners, some of whom cannot be found, there is great delay and expense in acquiring the right to work the coal.
4. Barriers of coal are left between different properties, without real necessity, and millions of tons are thus wasted.
5. Drainage and pumping would be less costly and more effective under centralised ownership.
6. Boundaries are arbitrary and irregular, and coal is lost on that account.

7. Mineral owners are allowed to work minerals without providing support for the land above, and much damage is caused to buildings for which no compensation can be claimed.

Mr. Justice Sankey did not make any reference to the injustice of permitting private individuals to appropriate about £6,000,000 a year in royalties on coal without providing either labour or capital. But this vital aspect of the question rightly loomed large in the minds of the miners' representatives and their colleagues, and much most valuable evidence was obtained on it as the result of their questions.

It is unfortunate that that evidence has not yet been published, because some of the biggest royalty owners—men like the Duke of Northumberland, the Duke of Hamilton, the Marquis of Bute, Lord Durham, and Lord Tredegar—were put under the most searching cross-examination by the miners' leaders as to their titles to the coal seams which landlord-made law permits them to call their own property.

Whether or not their titles are sound in law is a very small matter. Their moral right is the vital thing, and there can be no question that no grants by kings "for services rendered" could ever establish such a right to the very substance of the planet on which we live, any more than to any other part of the solar system.



How the landlords have made use of their opportunities to profiteer in minerals may be judged by the following cases.

#### PROFITEERING IN MINERALS

Valuable evidence on this point was given before the Royal Commission whose final report was published in 1893.

The alleged willingness of landlords to reduce their charges in cases of necessity is often used as an argument in support of the present system; but such willingness has in fact been generally conspicuous by its absence.

Again and again pits have had to be shut up because no reduction in royalties could be secured. Between 1875 and 1878, 56 collieries were stopped and 85 partially stopped in the county of Durham alone.

In Cumberland a colliery had to be closed for the same reason. The company had paid £5,500 for coal they could not get, and the minimum rent was £700 a year.

In another case the royalty on iron-ore was fixed at 7s. a ton when the selling price was from 30s. to 36s. The price fell to 14s., but the royalty remained fixed and the mine had to be abandoned.

A Cornish tin mine worked at a loss for ten years, the loss being exactly the amount of the royalty.

No reduction, mine closed; hundreds of men thrown out of work.

The Wigan Coal & Iron Company paid £10,000 a year in royalties to the Duke of Newcastle, and made no profit for themselves. Mine closed. The same company paid £6,000 for coal they never got.

The Barrow Hematite Steel Company paid £126,000 a year in royalties to the Duke of Devonshire, the Duke of Buccleuch, and Lord Muncaster, and for years made no profit on their £2,000,000 capital. At that time the total wages received by all the miners was only half the amount paid in royalties.

The Darlaston Steel & Iron Company made a profit of £2,000 a year and every penny of it went in royalties.

The Cramlington Colliery, in Northumberland, made no profit for eight years, and the Seaton Delaval Colliery none for fourteen years, but jointly they paid over £30,000 a year in royalties to idle landlords all that time.

Two collieries constructed a private railway line at a cost of £150,000. They paid every year in wayleaves twice the full fee simple value of the land and £23,000 in royalties when they made no profit.

In a Northumbrian case the Marquis of Hastings prohibited the carriage of coal to any other place than the Tyne, except on the payment of the same

wayleaves that would have been charged on that line. The coal went to Blyth and Sunderland, but had to pay, although they did not cross the Marquis's land.

Sir Arthur Markham gave a case where a landlord charged £800 a year for coal crossing a piece of his land no bigger than the floor of the House of Commons.

In another case 4*d.* a ton was charged for crossing a strip of land only twenty yards wide.

The lease of the Dolcoath tin mine, near Camborne, was renewed on the old terms on payment of a fine of £25,000, after the landlord had tried to get up to £40,000 a year as a share of the profits.

The Devon Great Consols mine paid in royalties to the Duke of Bedford £300,000. When the lease was renewed he exacted a fine of £20,000. Then for years no profit was made beyond the £8,000 to £10,000 royalties, and the landlord's charges were only reduced "at the fifty-ninth minute of the eleventh hour," when the mine was about to close.

Sir Christopher Furness said in 1909 that a certain company had paid in royalties £300,000 in ten years; and bear in mind the receivers of royalties pay not a farthing in local rates.

Mr. Lloyd George, at Newcastle in 1909, told of a company in South Wales which paid £3,500 a year in rates, made £3,000 profit, and paid £10,600 a

year in royalties; and of a company in Yorkshire which spent £500,000 in developing an area and paid £20,000 a year to a landlord for coal, the very existence of which was unknown a few years previously. Since then the landlord's income has gone up to £40,000 a year and he has done absolutely nothing to earn it. Incidentally, it may be recorded that a clause was inserted in the lease to prevent any man living in the cottages on the estate who had been convicted of an offence against the game laws.

#### PROFITEERING IN LAND FOR HOUSES

One of the most urgent of all questions is that of the proper housing of the people. Even before the war the nation needed many hundreds of thousands of houses more than it had, and hundreds of thousands of the existing houses were scandalously unfit for human habitation. For five years building has been at a standstill, and the cost of labour and material is now so great that houses for the workers cannot be built except at a heavy loss, which has to be met by subsidies from the rates and taxes. This fact makes it all the more necessary that land should be secured at reasonable prices, so that not only may the deficit be reduced but also that adequate garden ground may be provided for each house.

The evil consequences of permitting private

individuals to treat land as a means of securing the greatest possible profit for themselves are very marked in the case of housing. Inevitably they consider that the best use of land is that which will produce the highest rent. Fifty houses to the acre mean a higher rent than ten or twelve to the acre. The whole tendency of private ownership of land has therefore been to foster the crowding of houses on the land to the utmost extent allowed by lax building regulations. What this has meant to the health and well-being of the people it is difficult even to imagine, and impossible to calculate. For the landlords it meant a high income, and that was the main consideration to them. But to the people it meant a high rate of sickness and death, which was entirely due to the stupid policy of allowing private profits to be put before the well-being of the people.

## No. 9

FOREIGN COMPETITION IN IRON AND STEEL  
INDUSTRY <sup>1</sup>

In Germany and Belgium our competitors have a great advantage in their system of State railways, which charge much lighter rates than do our own private railways. I have seen it stated that this

<sup>1</sup> Extract from pamphlet by Joseph Hyder, *State Ownership of Minerals*.

difference is sometimes nearly 10*s.* a ton in favour of our rivals. But beyond this we are handicapped by the higher mineral royalties in this country. Let us take the case of the manufactured article, whether it be a rail, a ship-plate, or a girder, and reckon the total amount of the royalties on the coal, lime, and ore out of which it is made. In Great Britain a ton of pig iron will pay in royalties from 3*s.* in Cleveland to 6*s.* 3*d.* in Scotland, Cumberland, or Lancashire. In Germany the royalty is about 6*d.*; in France, 8*d.*; and in Belgium about the same. In Great Britain a ton of iron ship-plates will have paid a tax to the landlord of 5*s.* 9*d.* But the corresponding royalty in Germany, France, and Belgium would be 1*s.* only to the State. In Great Britain a ton of steel rails would pay a tax of from 3*s.* 8*d.* to 7*s.* 3*d.* to the landlord; while in the other countries the State would only charge from 8*d.* to 11*d.* Thus it will be seen how British industry is handicapped by the land monopoly. And if we can do so well in spite of this hindrance to success, it is reasonable to assume that a great impetus would be given to our trade if we competed on equal terms. On the Continent the sovereignty of the State over the minerals has long been recognised; and although the Continental system is far from perfect, yet it is much better than our own.

It must not be overlooked that, under State

ownership of the minerals, in Germany and elsewhere, not only are the royalties more reasonable, but, whether small or great, they are paid into the national exchequer, and so benefit the whole body of taxpayers. In this country they are excessive, and simply enrich private individuals. If the Kentish coalfield could be profitably worked the national purse would not directly benefit so long as the present system lasts. The only result would be that a number of Kentish land-owners would revel in an accession of unearned increment, which would doubtless be as welcome as was their share of the relief which the 1895-1900 Parliament gave them out of the pockets of the urban taxpayers. In conclusion, then, it must be clear that we shall have to imitate our chief competitors by nationalising our mineral resources. First, let us have a parliamentary declaration that all minerals at present undiscovered belong to the Crown. This would be a valuable measure, costing nothing and hurting nobody.

## No. 10

STATE PURCHASE OF MINERALS<sup>1</sup>

There remains the much larger question of acquiring the minerals that are known to exist and are being worked at the present time. However

<sup>1</sup> Extract from same pamphlet as Nos. 8 and 9.

absurd the claim of private property in the very bowels of the earth must appear to every thoughtful man, it has been so long recognised by the law of the land that there is only one practicable way of reform in regard to it. Mineral rights have been bought and sold in the market, and honestly earned money has been invested in acquiring them. Vested interests have thus been created which it is impossible to ignore. The State has permitted the system for so long that it would not be fair to withhold compensation from the holders of private interests when those interests have to be acquired by the nation.

For a fuller statement of the case for compensation to landlords I must refer readers to L.N.S. Tract No. 79, "The Crux of the Land Question, or How the State can buy all the Land without Loan or Tax." The first thing to be done is to discover what the true selling value of the minerals actually is. The Land Nationalisation Society's "Tax and Buy" Land Bill (gratis copies of which will be sent to applicants) provides :

1. That the landlord shall declare the value of the land (including minerals) he holds.
2. That he shall pay taxes upon the accepted valuation.
3. That such valuation shall be taken as the basis of purchase whenever land is acquired by the community.



Compensation could be paid to the landlords either in the shape of Redeemable Land Bonds or Terminable Annuities, as public opinion may decide. By either method the following advantages are secured :

1. The immediate establishment of public land ownership, with a free hand to deal with the minerals in the way best calculated to promote the mining industry as a whole.

2. The transfer from private to public control is achieved at once without the borrowing of any money.

3. As the annuities terminate, or as the bonds are redeemed by the application of the income derived by the State from its new property, the debt is ultimately completely extinguished.

4. The whole value of newly discovered mineral deposits is available for public purposes.

## No. 11

### HOW TO NATIONALISE THE LAND

BEING A SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS FOR A LAND NATIONALISATION  
BILL, WITH OBSERVATIONS THEREON

(1) *The State to become the Ground Landlord of the Entire Country.*—On a given date all private ownership of land, including minerals, to come to an end, and the State to become the ground landlord of the entire country.

*Remarks.*—(a) We may, of course, have to accept less and nationalise in instalments; it will, however, be no more difficult to get the principle approved for the whole than for part and our scheme should provide for the whole.

(b) The advantages of municipal authorities and other bodies of public utility having only one owner, namely the State, to deal with in connection with housing, land settlement schemes, etc., are obvious.

(2) *In the case of Agricultural Land, the State must also own the Buildings.*—The State would take the place of the existing landlord as owner of farm buildings.

*Remarks.*—Until this occurs, with the abolition of the present iniquitous system of tied cottages, there can be no such thing as real liberty in country districts. With the national and local administration proposed, provision being made for full democratic representation of all classes, it is evident that buildings and equipment, which are at present the property of the landowner, will be maintained in good and efficient order, this being to the benefit of both the tenant and the community.

(3) *Tenure of Agricultural Lands.*—Existing occupiers farming or cultivating land will continue as State tenants, and can never be turned out so

long as they farm up to the standard.laid down by the Administration. Rents will be revised every seven years.

*Remarks.*—Each occupier, be he freeholder or tenant, will have that full security of tenure which is only obtainable now by the few who can afford, and obtain the opportunity, to buy their land; and the capital that would go to buy the land will be set free for the vastly more important purpose of working it. A fair rent will be charged, and its reduction or increase according to circumstances, will be considered at the end of every seven years. It will not be raised to one man as against another, *i. e.* there will be no favouritism. In the event of an increase which the tenant considers unfair, he will have the right to appeal to a tribunal, and any increment in rental value that does occur will go to the benefit of the community instead of the enrichment of a private landlord.

(4) *Fixing Rents.*—It is assumed that to begin with the rents to be charged by the State for the first period of seven years will generally be the existing rents subject to the removal of any conspicuous inequalities. Should the occupier desire to give up his tenancy at the end of any period of seven years he would receive full compensation for all improvements effected by him.

*Remarks.*—(a) The State, as landlord, would, through the Local Land Council, make such improvements as fall to be done by landlords, but improvements made by tenants would become their property and full compensation given for them if the tenancy was surrendered at the end of any seven-yearly term.

(b) There would be nothing to prevent an occupier from selling his farm with improvements, and the purchaser would acquire exactly the same title as the seller, namely, the right to remain in possession so long as he conformed to the conditions laid down above under No. (3), his rent being subject to revision at the end of every seven years in precisely the same way.

(5) *Purchase Price.*—Two alternative bases are suggested, either (a) Twenty times the rateable value of the property as existing at 31st December, 1918; or (b) The value put upon the property by the Government valuation of 1910.

*Remarks.*—(a) The iniquity of a low basis being taken for rating purposes, *i. e.* when it comes to paying the community, and an enormously higher figure for selling purposes, *i. e.* when it comes to taking money from the community, is now generally recognised, and no less a person than Sir Edward Carson quite recently said in the House of Commons that the State should acquire land at its rateable value.

(6) *Tenure on All Properties other than Agricultural Lands and Buildings.*—Terms of years under existing leases shall be respected, so far as this Bill is concerned, except that no lease shall be recognised as being for a longer period than ninety years from the year 1913 and that every rental shall be subject to revision every seven years.

*Remarks.*—This means that a man who has a dwelling house on lease expiring say forty years hence does not have his lease interfered with but pays his ground rent to an agent of the State instead of an agent of the private landlord. The amount of ground rent he has to pay is, however, subject to revision every seven years (he having received compensation for this interference with his lease, as described in paragraph 5 of the “Proposals” printed separately), and there is no reason to suppose that the community, working through a democratically elected council, will be less tender-hearted in this respect than the agents of great private landlords.

(b) Under this system all leasehold properties, as the leases terminate, will become the property of the community, and it will be open to the administrative bodies referred to, to consider whether the present iniquitous system of dilapidations should not be either abolished or profoundly modified.

(7) *Purchase Price to be Paid in Bonds.*—The purchase price of each property to be paid by national land bonds yielding  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. per annum interest, the bonds to be paid off within sixty-seven years.

*Remarks.*—(a) Land-owners will say that by paying them in bonds yielding only  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest, such bonds will not be worth what they purport to be seeing that money now invested in war loans yields over 5 per cent. The answer is that (1) the State is not likely to continue to pay so high a rate of interest; (2) Land-owners have frequently complained that they did not make anything like  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. out of their land; and (3) They will be given a vastly better security than their land, for a British Government loan repayable at par is not likely to fall much in value and can be turned into cash at any time, which is not the case with capital immobilised in land.

(b) Some reformers object to payment of a capital sum and advocate compensation by means of annuities terminating after a certain number of years. There need, however, be no difference in the cost to the community between the two methods; it depends solely upon the number of years. In the scheme suggested the bonds carry interest at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; another quarter per cent. per annum (5s. per £100 bond)

devoted to paying off bonds year by year, will extinguish every bond in sixty-seven years. If, instead of this, the land-owners received an annuity for sixty-seven years at the rate of  $4\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. per annum with no further payment of interest or any return of capital, the cost to the community would be exactly the same. Several Indian railways were purchased by the Indian Government by means of annuities, and the annuity holders, by voluntarily agreeing to put aside each year a small amount of their interest, thus built up a fund whereby, at the end of a term of years, they received back their capital. The point of this remark is that criticism of the *method of compensation*, namely capital sum as against annuity, is based upon a misapprehension, the two methods being simply two different ways of expressing the same sum. Objection to the total amount to be paid—which some may consider too high and others too low—is quite another matter and is not dealt with in these remarks.

(8) *Finance of Land Nationalisation*.—In *British Incomes and Property* (1916), by Dr. J. C. Stamp, of the Inland Revenue, the value of land in the United Kingdom is estimated at £1,155,000,000. Assume the value of farmhouses and agricultural buildings to be as much as £250,000,000, and we

arrive at an estimated amount of £1,400,000,000, which the State would have to issue in bonds to pay for the land and properties.

*Remarks.*—(a) The capital figure is of little importance, as the State would immediately secure a rental equivalent to the interest it had to pay on the bonds, and probably more.

(b) Future increments in the value of the land arising from growth of population, municipal enterprise, railway extensions and other improvements in transport, will go to the community.

(c) After sixty-seven years (and possibly a good deal earlier if the proceeds of increments in value of buildings as the leases expire, etc., go to the community instead of to private owners and are applied to earlier repayment of the bonds) the whole land of the country will belong to the nation without any debt against it.

(d) What is far more important than any monetary advantages, great as these should be, is the fact that the nation as owner of the land on which it lives and through the authorities it sets up for the purpose, will assure the full development of the national resources. Incidentally it may be remarked that this will result in large areas at present used for game,  
o



hunting, private pleasure or other uneconomic purposes, being properly developed, which will add to the home production of food and provide additional revenue.

(9) *Power to Purchase Buildings.*—The Administration shall have the right, on giving six months' notice, to acquire any buildings used for private or trade purposes on payment of a sum not exceeding twenty times the net annual rental or the 1910 valuation as mentioned in Paragraph No. (5), plus a reasonable compensation for disturbance.

*Remarks.*—The State, municipal authority, railway company, etc., can to-day secure power to expropriate any property required for public purposes, but usually only after considerable delay and excessive cost. The above provision simplifies the procedure.

(10) *Administration.*—A National Land Council to be formed consisting of seven members, of whom one shall be the Minister for Lands (a member of the Cabinet with a seat in Parliament), three appointed respectively by the Ministries of Lands, Health and Food, and three to be appointed from panels nominated by (a) Farmers' Unions and Chambers of Agriculture, (b) Associations of Small-holders and Allotment-holders, (c) Agricultural Labourers' Unions.

The National Land Council shall divide the

United Kingdom into areas, each of which shall possess a Local Land Council, to which the National Land Council will delegate such powers as it may think fit. The Local Land Council shall consist of not less than eight persons appointed by the National Land Council, seven persons selected from panels put forward by the County Councils and other local authorities of the area and the various bodies nominating panels for the National Land Council in such fashion that equal representation is given to all parties.

The control of land within the area of any borough, county borough or urban district council shall be vested in the local authority for that area, subject to the control of the National Land Council.

*Remarks.*—By the above scheme it is claimed that the necessary amount of control by the central authority will be exercised side by side with representatives of local and sectional interests. In a country approximating more and more to a democratic form of Government the representatives nominated by responsible Ministers are representatives of the community in so far as the Government itself reflects the choice of the electors. In others words, if a Labour Government were in power, it is to be presumed that the majority of the representatives appointed by the Ministries would be men or women holding Labour views; if a

Conservative Government were in power the majority would be men or women holding Conservative views. This is inevitable and even desirable provided fair representation is given to all parties.

## No. 12

## DRAFT LAND NATIONALIZATION BILL

(*With Explanatory Notes*)

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A BILL TO ABOLISH PRIVATE PROPERTY IN LAND AND TO  
MAKE IT NATIONAL PROPERTY

BE IT ENACTED *by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows :*

1. *The Establishment of National Ownership.*

On (the first day of January, 1921) all land, including minerals, in England, Scotland and Wales which is not already under public ownership shall become inalienable national property, and all holders of it will be required to pay to the public authorities hereinafter provided an annual rent for its use according to its true annual value.

*Note.*—A considerable acreage of land is already in the possession of public authorities. This Bill proposes no interference with such land.

2. *Ministry of National Lands.*—For this purpose, the supreme control of such land shall thereafter be vested in a Ministry of National Lands, as trustee for the nation, the head of which shall be responsible to Parliament and shall be a member of the House of Commons.

3. *An Advisory National Land Council.*—Associated with the Minister of Lands, as an Advisory Council, there shall be a National Land Council consisting of ten members, of whom one shall be nominated by the Board of Agriculture, one by the Minister of Health, one by the County Councils' Association, one by the Municipal Corporations' Association, one by the Urban Councils' Association, one by the Rural Districts' Association, one by the Trade Union Congress, one by the Co-operative Congress, one by the National Farmers' Union, and one by the National Agricultural Workers' Union.

. *Note.*—By this arrangement the parties most interested in the proper utilisation of land are brought into partnership with the Minister of Lands—viz. the two State departments which are responsible for food production and housing, the local councils which will have to administer the land, the general body of organised workers, the tenant-farmers, and the agricultural workers.

4. *Administration by Public Land Committees of*

*Local Authorities.* Subject to such general regulations as may be prescribed by Parliament or by the Ministry of Lands, the national land within their respective areas shall be administered by the following Local Authorities :

- (a) The London County Council,
- (b) Councils of county boroughs and boroughs other than metropolitan boroughs,
- (c) Urban district councils,
- (d) Rural district councils,

by means of specially appointed Committees, to be called Public Land Committees, who shall have power to co-opt members from outside to the extent of one-fourth of their own number.

*Note.*—Although the supreme ownership of the land will be nationalised, the administration of it will be decentralised and in each locality the land will be developed by local authorities according to local conditions.

5. *A Public Register of all Tenancies of Land.*  
In every district applications for the use of land shall be made to the local Public Land Committee, which shall decide the terms upon which its tenancy is to be granted; and a register shall be kept of all tenancies, showing the name of the tenant and the rent of each holding, such register to be open for public inspection.

*Note.*—The utmost publicity is necessary in order to avoid even the suspicion of favouritism or corruption, which naturally arises when essential information is withheld from the community in general.

6. *Security of Tenure Qualified by Public Right of Resumption.*—Every tenant of public land shall enjoy security of tenure and freedom from disturbance so long as he fulfils the conditions of his lease or agreement, provided always that the Public Land Committee shall have power to resume possession of the land, after giving due notice and paying compensation for the tenant's improvements, whenever it may decide that the general public advantage will be best served by such action being taken—as, for instance, if the tenant fails to cultivate the land properly, or if the land is required by the Public Land Committee for its own or any public purposes, or for the subdivision or amalgamation of holdings.

*Note.*—It would be impossible to exaggerate the importance of security of tenure. Without it, one of the chief incentives to industry is lacking. It is the purpose of this clause to give to every State tenant as nearly as possible the security which is now only enjoyed by freeholders. Absolute permanence of possession under all conceivable circumstances it is, of

course, impossible to give, and not even a freeholder has such permanence now, since he may be, and often is, dispossessed under existing powers of compulsory acquisition of land by public authorities or by railway companies.

But every State tenant will be safe from arbitrary interference by irresponsible private owners, and if circumstances necessitate the termination of his tenancy he will receive adequate notice and full compensation for all resultant loss.

*7. Prohibition of Sub-letting but permission of Assignment and Bequest.*—A tenant of public land may not sub-let his holding, but he may assign his lease to another, or he may bequeath it to a member of his family, subject to the Public Land Committee being satisfied as to the suitability of his proposed successor.

*Note.*—Every man has a natural attachment for the home in which he was born, and it is an honourable desire that the home should be kept in possession of the family as long as possible. Other things being equal, the son (for instance) should have a prior claim to succeed his father as the tenant of the land on which the family home is placed.

*8. Periodical Revision of Rent.*—The rent of each holding shall be subject to revision at the

end of every seven years, according to such fluctuations (if any) in the value of land as are not due to improvements affected by the tenant.

*Note.*—A fixed rent is obviously impossible. Although fair when first fixed, under altered circumstances it might afterwards become either too high or too low. In fairness both to the tenant and the community, it must be subject to revision, but not so frequently as to cause uncertainty and to shake confidence or prevent enterprise.

9. *Right of Appeal to Fair Rent Courts.*—Where a tenant is dissatisfied with the amount of the rent, either of land or buildings, which he is called upon to pay, he may appeal for its revision to a fair rent court.

*Note.*—The fact that every tenant will be a voter for the administering local council will of itself check any tendency there might be to charge too high a rent; but it is undesirable that the authority which has the spending of the rent should have the decisive voice as to what the rent should be. For this reason, it will be necessary to establish judicial courts to which appeal may be made for the fixing of fair rents.

10. *Agricultural Tenant-right.*—(a) In the case of agricultural land the State shall acquire not



only the land, but also the buildings and other improvements; but every tenant of such land shall have the right to buy them from the State at a fair price (to be settled by agreement, or by arbitration), payable either in cash or by means of an annual rent charge, or partly by the one and partly by the other.

(b) The ownership of such buildings and improvements shall continue to be vested in the State until their purchase by the tenant has been completed, when they will form part of the tenant-right of each holding, and all other improvements effected by the tenant shall be his own property.

(c) Upon every change of tenancy the tenant-right shall be taken over by the incoming tenant at a fair valuation, or alternatively by the Public Land Committee.

*Note.*—As this is a Bill for the nationalisation of *land*, it is desirable to simplify the administration of it by distinguishing between the land itself and the improvements on it. The latter may well be regarded as the property of the tenant, and it will be to his interest to maintain them in good condition and to increase them. Consideration for his own advantage will engender greater caution and economy in expenditure and entail less delay than would be the case if every improvement had to be made at the first cost of the Public

Land Committee and had to await its convenience. But at the same time, the proper upkeep of the buildings and improvements would be an implied condition of each tenancy, under penalty of its cancellation for defective utilisation of the land.

11. *Enfranchisement of Leaseholds*.—In the case of building leases under which the building would have reverted to the freeholder at the end of a specified period, the State, upon acquiring the rights and interests of the freeholder, shall give the right to the leaseholder to acquire the ownership of the building at a fair price, to be settled either by agreement or by arbitration, and thereafter the rent payable to the State shall be determined by the value of the land apart from all buildings upon it and shall be subject to revision every seven years as already provided.

*Note*.—The demand by leaseholders for the enfranchisement of leaseholds has always included the demand not only for ownership of the buildings which they have built and maintained at their own cost, but also to the land to which they have no more moral right than its present owners have. By this clause they are enabled to acquire the buildings, which would otherwise revert to the State at the end of the lease, but the land would remain public property.

12. *Compensation to Dispossessed Freeholders.*  
To every owner whose interests in land are acquired by the State under this Act, the State shall pay compensation, provided that he can furnish satisfactory proofs of title.

*Note.*—Considering the nature of land, as the prime unmakeable necessary of all life and industry, the way in which it was originally acquired and the manner in which many of its owners have for centuries exploited the community for their own private ends, it is not surprising that a strong feeling exists among the landless masses that if compensation is to be paid at all it should not be paid to the landlords, but should be exacted from them. But however true this contention might be in the case of the old landed families, which have held land for hundreds of years and never bought it in the first instance, it cannot properly be applied universally, as there are hundreds of thousands of freeholders whose titles are based upon purchase.

Seeing that the State itself has sanctioned and encouraged the creation of private ownership of land, it is only just that it should recognise the results of its own policy, and give fair consideration when it is changed to the interests which have grown up under the protection of the law.

· 13. *Terminable Annuities*.—Such compensation shall be paid in the form of terminable annuities, based upon the net income now derived from the land at the time of its transfer to the State, if it is let to a tenant, or its net annual value if it is occupied by the owner himself.

*Note*.—If not by terminable annuities, the compensation might be given in the shape of National Land Bonds of a capital value equal to the market value, or the taxable value, or to so many years' purchase of the present annual value of the land, bearing a certain interest and redeemable at their face value. One great drawback of this method is the length of time which must elapse before the Bonds are redeemed and the debt extinguished. With a sinking fund of 5s. per £100, it would take sixty-seven years to accumulate an amount sufficient to redeem the Bonds.

Another objection is that at the end of that time, although the State would have got rid of the debt upon the land, the recipients of the redemption money would still possess monetary claims upon goods produced by and services of the workers equal to the whole value of the land sixty-seven years before.

Exactly the same result would be produced if the terminable annuities were, according to the usual practice in such cases, made larger

by the addition of a small percentage as a sinking fund, with a view to the annuitants having at the end of the period the full capital value that they had at the beginning.

In either case, the full amount that is now paid as private rent would persist in the shape of interest, and would be as great a burden upon the people in its new shape as it was in its old.

Even where undoubted services may have been rendered when such claims were originally created, there can surely be no justification for their indefinite continuance. And this argument is all the stronger in the case of the descendants or successors of the original landlords, whose titles were based on no services whatever to the community.

No man on the strength of some work which he has himself done, however valuable it may have been, can have the right to hand down to his descendants for an indefinite period an income that will enable them to live without earning their own living by their own labour. The fact that the power to do so now exists does not justify the creation of a privileged class of non-producers, who depend for their existence upon their inheritance of claims upon the labour of their fellows, instead of upon the value of the work which they themselves do.

. Such an arrangement is bad for those whom it is designed to favour by exempting them from honourable labour, and it is still worse for their contemporaries, who are consequently called upon to support them and to impoverish themselves in doing so.

The principle of the laws of copyright and patents may be taken as an illustration. No men have served humanity better than the writers of good books, the composers of good music, and the inventors of new processes of industry and labour-saving appliances. But even they are only permitted to have sold ownership of the undoubted products of their own brain-power for a limited number of years, during which they are presumably able to reap an adequate reward for their works or inventions. The beneficial results of their genius are continuously enjoyed by society, but no descendants of theirs will live in luxury hundreds of years hence on the strength of the good accomplished by their ancestors.

If, therefore, it be just, as it is, to reward such benefactors of humanity by terminable payments, it cannot be unjust to compensate in a similar way those whose only claim is that the law has enabled them to acquire the lordship of some part of the unmakeable surface of the earth, which on every moral ground ought

always to have been regarded as the inheritance of the whole people.

The exact period during which the annuities should be paid is a matter of detail; but while it should be long enough to satisfy every reasonable expectation and prevent any real hardship or injustice to individuals, it should not be so long as to constitute an undue burden upon the nation as a whole. It is well to remember that millions of men (most of whom were landless men) were conscripted to serve their country in all the horrors of the European War, at an arbitrarily fixed pittance, which they were powerless to get increased. Thousands of them had to sacrifice valuable businesses or positions, and vast numbers of them sacrificed their limbs, their reason, or their lives in serving their country.

By the side of such tremendous sacrifices, no one can truthfully say that it is a hardship to any dispossessed landlord that his annuity will cease at the end of a reasonable and definite number of years.

*A Sinking Fund to provide Full Capital  
Value*

It may be urged that annuities equal only to the exact annual value of the land at the time of its acquisition by the State do not

provide full compensation, as generally understood. If, therefore, Parliament should decide that the recipients of the compensation annuities shall have the full capital value of the land at the end of a given period, and so be not worse off than the possessors of other forms of property, this could easily be done by means of a sinking fund.

By the operation of compound interest at 5 per cent. for every £100,000,000 of annuities an annual sinking fund of £9,562,500 would provide the full capital value at the end of fifty years, £16,562,500 per annum would extinguish the debt at the end of forty years, and £30,209,166 per annum would achieve the same object in thirty years.

It is of course obvious that the money for the sinking fund should be raised by taxation of property owners generally (including ex-landlords), graded as the income-tax is, rather than by taxation of the workers.

#### *No Compensation for Prospective Values*

It is a very common experience of public authorities when they have to acquire land in urban areas, that the price demanded is out of all proportion to the actual rent received for it. The reason is that the owners assert that it has a building value, although it may only be used for agriculture at the present time.



In the expectation of being able to charge a higher price when such land is required for building purposes, a pernicious system of speculation in land has grown up, which is nothing less than a gamble in the future needs of the people for space; and the rating of land on the income it yields instead of upon its market value, has facilitated the withholding of it from use until it is considered ripe for development, which means when it can be sold at a price that will satisfy the speculator or the monopolist withholder.

Thus, an acre of land may be worth £25 for agriculture, but the owner may demand £1,000 an acre, and often much more, because of its possibilities as a building site.

It is time that the community should refuse to pay such fancy and hypothetical prices, and should pay no more in compensation than a sum which represents the loss of actually accrued income.

14. *First Charge on Land Revenue.*—The first charge on the revenue from land shall be the payment of the compensation annuities, and until those annuities are terminated all rent (after deducting costs of administration) shall be transmitted by the Public Land Committee to the Ministry of Lands.

15. *Allocation of Rent.*—Upon the termination of such annuities three-fourths of the land revenue (after deducting the costs of administration) shall be retained for local purposes by the administering councils, and one-fourth shall be transmitted to the Ministry of Lands for national purposes; and from the beginning until the end of the currency of the aforesaid annuities all future increases in rent shall be allotted in the same proportion.

*Note.*—As land is the property of the nation as a whole, it is obviously necessary that a part of the rent should be paid into the national exchequer. Moreover, the value of land is not entirely the result of local factors. For instance, the fact that the National Government is centralised in London, makes it right that the whole nation should share in its enormous land values. Similar considerations apply in places where national arsenals are established, and in the case of agricultural land, whose value is largely determined by the national agricultural policy.